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CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

BY

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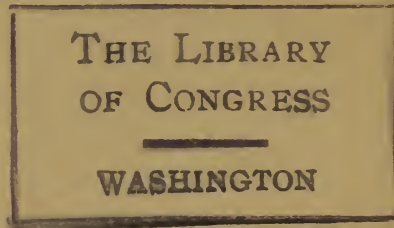
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P R E F A C E.

THE Lectures contained in this small treatise were given in the years 1892-93 and 1893-94, at the University of Chicago, and at Crozer Theological Seminary, Chester, Pa. They are but the Second Part of what was originally designed to be a volume including both *Apologetics* and *Christian Evidences*. It had been the hope of the author to complete this volume in the summer of 1894, but failing health delayed the work. In rewriting the Lectures for publication, he began with these now given to the public, and had proceeded as far as page 131, when he was obliged to lay down his pen, never again to resume it; they have have been completed chiefly from his unrevised notes, and have been added to only where their extreme brevity made some expansion necessary to clearness or to completeness of the thought.

I wish to thank Rev. Robert Kerr Eccles, M.D., for the preparation of the Index, and Professor Milton G. Evans, Rev. F. F. Briggs, and Rev. B. D. Stelle, for kindly sending me their class-room notes, which furnished me with the order of the later Lectures, and otherwise aided me in completing them.

HARRIET P. ROBINSON.

BOSTON, February 21, 1895.

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CHRISTIAN EVIDENCES.

A PROPER study of Christian Evidences presupposes a settled conviction, on the part of the student, of such fundamental truths of religion as the existence of God; the immortality of the soul; the moral nature of man and an eternal moral law to which that nature responds; the opposition of man to the law of God and his need of redemption; and the validity of the Sacred Scriptures as the History of God's redemptive dealings with the race, and as the Record of His will and laws by which it should be lifted from its sinful degradation to purity, holiness, and a participation of His own life.

Accepting these truths, we may proceed to a consideration of the immediate evidences of the Divine origin of the Christian religion. These may be distributed under three general heads.

First. Those adduced by Jesus and His Apostles, and then specially convincing.

Second. Those adduced by Jesus and His Apostles, and still available. Plan.

Third. Those developed in the progress of Christianity in the world, and now specially applicable.

PART I.

THE EVIDENCES SPECIALLY RELIED ON
BY JESUS AND HIS APOSTLES.

Too many treatises on Christian evidences seem to imply that the first and main reliance of Jesus was on the miracles He wrought. Brief examination of the Gospels, however, suffices to show that miracles were neither the first nor the principal evidence adduced, but were resorted to only in dealing with minds already prepared to be convinced by them. Some were immediately convinced by what Jesus said and in Himself was; others required the persuasive influence of miracles, or of Divine interposition in His behalf; others, few in number, were won by a recognition of Jesus as the One foretold in Messianic prophecies. The evidences adduced by Jesus and His Apostles accordingly were: —

Evidences
relied on by
Jesus and
His dis-
ciples
classified.

I. An appeal to consciousness, or the self-evidencing power of truth.

II. An appeal to Divine attestation by supernatural signs, or the working of miracles.

III. An appeal to prophecy, or a showing that the prophecies were then being fulfilled.

CHAPTER I.

SELF-EVIDENCING POWER OF TRUTH.

1. IT is noteworthy that, according to all four of the Gospels, the Twelve were won to discipleship by the teachings of Jesus, and not by His miracles. The twelve disciples won by teaching of Jesus.

2. The first formal teaching of Jesus and avowal of His mission, according to the first three Gospels, were at Nazareth, and, immediately afterwards, at Capernaum. To His first miracles wrought at the latter place He was naturally led by His teaching. Teaching of truth preceded miracles.

3. Jesus seems to have resorted to miracles only to reach those less receptive minds unconvinced by His teachings. When His teaching was objected to, He replied, Miracles for unreceptive minds. "Though ye believe not Me, believe the works" (John x. 38). And when Thomas refused to believe in the Resurrection except on visual and tactual evidence, the words of Jesus were, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (John xx. 29).

4. The teaching of Jesus is repeatedly said to have been with "power" and "authority,"

and officers sent to arrest Him declare, "Never man spake like this man" (John vii. 46). The

"Power" and "authority" are not to be explained by emphasis, or tone, or personal bearing, but by the self-evidencing power of the truth He uttered.

This is evident from the general wonderment as to the source of His knowledge and wisdom, unlettered carpenter as He was (Matt. xiii. 54; Mark vi. 2). His teaching was not only wholly unlike the teaching then common, but carried such conviction to the heart as to be, in the minds of the Apostles at least, wholly unaccountable, unless Divine in its origin. "Thou hast the words of eternal life," said Peter to Jesus; "and we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John vi. 68, 69).

5. The Apostles' method of procedure was like that of their Master. Their first and main

reliance, as is evident from the Acts and from their Epistles, was on the self-evidencing power of the truth.

CHAPTER II.

MIRACLES.

A SECOND kind of evidence adduced by Jesus and the Apostles consisted of supernatural signs, ordinarily known as "miracles." They were wrought in obedience to a universal Jewish expectation that the Messianic reign would be introduced and authenticated by them. In Jewish history successive dispensations — patriarchal, Mosaic, and prophetic — had been miraculously introduced. Jesus, in working miracles, complied with the challenge, "What sign showest Thou?"

Jewish expectation of miracles.

Three terms are used in the Gospels to designate miracles; "sign," "power," and "wonder"; the first denoting the design; the second, the source; the third, the effect on the beholders. The last and least important of these has unfortunately, through its Latin equivalent (*miraculum*), given to Theology the term "miracle" as representative of all three. The Gospel of John commonly uses the generic term "works," expressing the twofold idea of "source" and "design." Combining the meaning of all the terms, we may, with proximate accuracy, define a miracle

Three terms used to designate miracles.

as a phenomenon aside from the uniform course of nature, wrought by superhuman power, and adduced in attestation of one's claim to be a messenger from God. To add to this definition the statement that a miracle is either a violation, or a suspension of the laws of nature, or that it is wrought either by a hastening, or by a retarding of the processes of nature, is to give a theory of it rather than a definition.

SECTION I. — OBJECTIONS TO MIRACLES.

Objections have been urged against miracles on three grounds; they are said to be incredible, because contradicting the uniformity of nature; because, with our scientific knowledge of nature, its forces and its processes, the occurrence of miracles cannot be conceived as possible; because the occurrence of miracles, even if they could be conceived to occur, cannot be proved.

I. Incredible because contradicting the uniformity of nature. If nature be the work of God, then God would contradict Himself in working miracles.

α. The objection from uniformity of nature is discounted in the very idea of miracle. Uniformity is presupposed by it. If nature were not uniform, miracles could have no evidential value.

Miracles
objected to
on three
grounds.

That they
contradict
uniformity
of nature.

Miracle
presup-
poses uni-
formity of
nature.

b. We have already shown a Divine or supernatural revelation to be both possible and probable. Whatever can show the probability of such a revelation will show equal probability that the Divine Messengers communicating it would be supernaturally attested.

Supernaturalness of Revelation makes probable divinely attested Messenger.

c. According to every writer in the New Testament, Jesus Christ was Himself a moral miracle, — the greatest conceivable. In the language of Simeon, "Set for a sign [miracle] that shall be spoken against." He could have been such only by a direct contradiction of the uniformity of nature. But the uniformity of nature, in the sense of a combination of uniformly acting forces, cannot be conceived as existing for its own sake. The material and physical are everywhere subordinate to the organic, the organic to the vital, the vital to the mental, the mental to the moral. If for moral ends the uniformity of nature was broken in the moral miracle of the personal sinless Jesus, then it is by no means incredible that the uniformity of nature should be broken in the lesser miracles wrought in support of the ends for which Jesus came into the world.

Jesus Himself a miracle makes probable subordinate miracles.

d. The miracles of the Gospels — both those of healing, chiefly dwelt on by the Synoptists,

The Gospel miracles in harmony with the spirit and teachings of Jesus. and those of majesty disclosing the glory of Jesus, dwelt on by John — are all in most perfect harmony with the spirit, character, mission, and teaching of Jesus, and are so fitted to win to a reception of Himself and His message as to furnish in themselves good grounds for believing them to have occurred, whatever may have been their relation to the uniformity of nature.

2. The inconceivability of miracles in a world like ours, or the impossibility of their occurrence.

They can be said to be impossible only on one of three grounds; on the ground of a false definition of miracles as a violation of the laws of nature; or on the ground of a false theory of nature and of God's relation to it; or on the ground that physical science gives us so complete a knowledge of all the forces of nature, and of the laws regulating their action, as to warrant us in affirming that they afford no scope for the interposition of the supernatural equal to the production of miracles.

a. As to the definition. To define a miracle as a violation of the laws of nature is to inject into the definition an assumed or arbitrary conception of its relation to natural law. Nothing in Christianity, or in the Christian Scriptures, warrants us in supposing that God ever accomplished any end by an arrest or a violation of any one of His

Miracles
not impos-
sible.

Not a viola-
tion of any
natural or
moral law.

laws, physical, mental, or moral. The whole Christian system is an illustration of rigid conformity to, and fulfilment of, every known species of law. The least breaking of the least of laws, or the slightest interference with orders of sequence physical, mental, or moral, would throw suspicion on the whole system of Christianity as not of Divine origin. A violation of any moral law would be a signal of moral confusion and disorder throughout the realm of spirits; a violation of the least of physical laws would precipitate disaster and ruin in the physical universe. In order to the stability of the universe every conceivable force in it must act in harmony with every other. The slightest interference with any one of them, a violation of the law of the least of them, would throw the universe into chaos.

b. A false theory of nature and of God's relation to it. Thus, nature is conceived to be a self-existent and self-sustained system of forces mechanical and chemical, which work uniformly and by a necessity inherent in themselves; God, if He exists, must exist apart from nature; and if He works by it and through it must do so by coming to it from without and striking in upon its self-acting mechanism, a mode of action inadmissible, it is said, because inconceivable. But this deistic and dualistic theory of the world has

Impossible
only on a
false theory
of God's
relation to
nature.

no real support either from science or philosophy. Science may detect mechanical and chemical modes of action in the processes of nature; but modes are not causes, and can never account for the existence of phenomena. The nicely balanced interdependence and harmony among natural phenomena, resulting in a perfect equilibrium and unity of the whole, can be explained only as the product of an indwelling and ever present Intelligence and Will. With an intelligent Will thus ever present and working in and through the natural processes always uniformly, it certainly is not inconceivable that, working through two or more simultaneous and connected processes, it may produce unwonted phenomena on given occasions and in support of specific and definable ends. There is no more difficulty in conceiving the possibility of miracles so wrought than there is in conceiving of unwonted phenomena wrought by man, whenever he chooses to avail himself of known mechanical and chemical modes discernible in the processes of nature, or, of changes in the phenomena of the human organism in obedience to the dictates of an indwelling intelligence and directive will. In fact, the whole world, ourselves included, abounds in phenomena quite as marvellous in themselves considered as are the miracles of the New Testament, but they fail to impress us because of the commonness of their occurrence.

c. The assumption that science has given us sufficient knowledge of physical forces and of physical laws to warrant us in affirming that no event is possible which is clearly aside in its origin from natural causes. An event not produced by natural causes, it is said, is an uncaused event, in other words can be no real, but only an imaginary occurrence.

And on the assumption that we have complete knowledge of all possible physical forces and laws.

Science, it is claimed, shows the forces of nature to be a closed circle, acting and reacting by an inherent and unalterable necessity. But Science is rapidly discovering, or at least gravely suspecting, the existence of forces, or perhaps we should rather say *a power*, working within and without this circle, that is neither mechanical nor chemical in the modes of its action. Neither the power itself nor its methods of action come within the range of the senses, and thus within the scope of natural science. It is known to exist only through effects. Unless physical science can prove itself possessed of an exhaustive knowledge of every species of force or power disclosed through natural phenomena, it has no ground for affirming the impossibility of miracles.

3. Impossibility of proving miracles to have occurred. This objection rests on the theory that all human knowledge is the product of sense experience. The objection is sometimes stated in this way:

Objection that experience disproves miracles.

Nothing can be believed to have occurred which contradicts our experience of the uniformity of nature; miracles contradict this experience and are therefore incredible. Sometimes it takes this form: A belief in miracles rests on the testimony of others; we have had experience of the falsity of human testimony, but of no such changes in natural phenomena as are denominated miracles. No amount of human testimony, therefore, in behalf of miracles can counterbalance the weight of experiential evidence against them. To say nothing of the indefeasibleness of the psychological theory here assumed, viz. that all our knowledge is derived from the experiences of the senses, suffice it to indicate two defects in the reasoning which vitiate its conclusions. Its major premise is, that we have experience of uniformity in nature, and its minor premise, that we also have experience of uncertainty in human testimony. But *individual* experience is, of course, too limited to warrant a statement of uniformity in nature everywhere and always; it must be corroborated by testimony. But the minor premise is that testimony is uncertain. The major premise is made to assume ground which the minor repudiates. The premises thus contradict rather than confirm the conclusions drawn from them.

Again, the argument from experience against miracles proves too much; it makes the Apos-

tles and their associates to have been
 either fools or knaves. Testimony is
 invalidated by only one of two causes ; Argument proves too much.
 either that witnesses are self-deceived, or that they
 are intentional deceivers. To suppose the Apostles
 and their associates to have been deceived, is
 wholly inconsistent with what we know of them
 from their writings and from what is told of
 them in the Acts. No trace of over credulity
 on their part, or of defective critical judgment,
 is anywhere discernible. And if they were mis-
 led in their judgment of miracles it must have
 been by their Master, Jesus ; a supposition which
 is totally impossible. To suppose them to have
 been intentional deceivers is to suppose them to
 have united and to have persisted in falsehoods
 to which there could have been no rationally
 conceivable inducement, but from which every
 known human motive must have dissuaded
 them ; it is, in short, to suppose a moral mira-
 cle on their part quite as wonderful and unac-
 countable as any miracle to the occurrence of
 which they have testified.

SECTION II.—VALUE OF MIRACLES AS EVIDENCE.

There are two reasons why this value should
 be briefly considered. The first is the exag-
 gerated estimate placed on it by many writers
 in the last century and in the first half of the

Two reasons for considering value of miracles as evidence. present century, who not only make miracles to have been the principal evidence adduced by Jesus, but to be a most essential part of the evidence that should be adduced in our day. The second reason is a depreciation of the value by certain writers of our time, who not only declare that the miracles of Jesus can have no weight as evidence for us, but insist that the miracles of the New Testament are a good reason for doubting the trustworthiness of those who wrote them. In forming our own estimate of their evidential value, it will be well to remember: —

1. The immediate design of the miracles of Jesus was to authenticate Himself as a Divine Messenger, the expected Messiah, and to do this only to those who were addressed, and before whom the miracles were wrought. It was only in a remote way, if at all, — probably not at all, — that they were designed to authenticate the truth or the authority of His message. That they were expected to be wrought by the Messiah is evident from the reply of Jesus to the inquiry of the messengers of John the Baptist, “Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?” — “Go your way and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead

Design of the miracles of Jesus was to authenticate Himself as a Divine Messenger.

are raised." No miracles are ascribed to Jesus prior to his entrance on the Messianic office.

2. The miracles of Jesus are so much a part of His mission of love and practical benevolence, and stand in such relation to His teachings in the Gospel narratives, that they form a necessary integrant of the whole. Some of his teachings are intelligible only as we remember the miracles that suggested them, as, for instance, the discourses following the miraculous feeding of the five thousand on the eastern slope of the Sea of Galilee, and the raising of Lazarus from the dead at Bethany.

Necessary
part of His
mission of
love.

3. To eliminate from the Gospels the miracles and all the teachings of Jesus that need the miracles to give them force and point, would be to throw the remainder into confusion, and make it impossible to arrange it into a continuous and consistent whole. It would also make it difficult, if not impossible, to explain the claim of the Apostle Paul for himself and the other Apostles of the possession of miraculous power (Rom. xv. 18, 19; 2 Cor. xii. 12).

Miracles
necessary
to the con-
sistency of
the New
Testament
narrative.

4. Jesus made no display of miracles. He evidently set no great value on the possession of power to work them. When He had conferred miraculous powers on the seventy, He charged them not to rejoice because of their possession of the pow-

Jesus made
no display
of miracles.

ers, but "because their names were written in heaven" (Luke x. 20). To those benefited by the miracles he gave strict injunctions not to report nor to talk about them to others (Matt. ix. 30, xii. 16; Mark i. 44, iii. 12, viii. 26; Luke v. 14, viii. 56). The three witnesses of the Transfiguration were enjoined to say nothing about it during his lifetime (Matt. xvii. 9; Mark ix. 9). If the miracles of Jesus, instead of having actually occurred, had originated in tradition, or in a desire of the writers of the Gospel to glorify Him, these writers could hardly have been at so much pains to represent Jesus as depreciating their importance.

5. Jesus wrought miracles reluctantly and only in obedience to the needs of a class of minds deficient in spiritual insight (Matt. xii. 38; Mark viii. 11, 12); and He commended those whose faith needed no aid from experience of the senses (John xx. 29).

The evidential value of miracles has been supposed to be impaired, if not invalidated, by the New Testament recognition of satanic miracles. But it should be remembered that only what is valuable is counterfeited, and that a counterfeit always proves the existence of something genuine. And it is not to be forgotten that miracles, like all other kinds of evidence of moral and religious truth, can

Miracles wrought to meet the needs of minds deficient in spiritual insight.

Not invalidated by "satanic miracles."

prove at their best nothing more than strong probability. Moral and religious truth admit of no demonstration. Between truth and error every one must decide for himself according to the light he has. Between a real miracle and a counterfeit, and between miracles wrought for Divine ends and for satanic purposes, every one must evidently discriminate for himself. As aids in the discrimination regard must, of course, be had both to the character of him through whom the miracle is wrought and to the ends for which it is wrought.

CHAPTER III.

PROPHECY.

IN considering the nature and weight of the evidence from prophecy, we must distinguish between the use Jesus made of it and the use afterwards made of it by His Apostles. In the nature of the case, Jesus, as the active agent in the process of fulfilling prophecy, would dwell less on it than did the Apostles in their subsequent reflections. The force of the evidence would be much less discernible while the fulfilment was in progress than when it had been completed. In respect to the fulfilment of prophecy¹ as evidence of the Divine origin of Christianity, it should be borne in mind: —

1. That Jewish history recorded in the Sacred Scriptures is prophetic as well as historical. The Jewish people were reared for the specific purpose of providing a light for all nations, — a light that in its fullness was to shine in and through a divinely appointed person, the Messiah.

Messianic
prophecy
runs
through the
Old Testa-
ment.

¹ "The rule for the relation of prophecy to fulfilment is: A prophecy can only be regarded as fulfilled when the whole body of truth included in it has attained living realization." — Orelli's Old Testament Prophecy, § 7.

Every step in Jewish history was preparatory to His coming. Writers through successive centuries foresaw and foretold His coming. A golden thread of Messianic prophecy ran throughout the sacred writings. The Jewish imagination was roused to the use of the most glowing imagery in describing the majesty of this expected personage. And when Jesus came, the public mind, through a combination of various causes, was alive with expectation of His coming. To call attention to the fulfilment of prophecy as evidence that He had come was both natural and necessary.

2. From the words of Andrew to his brother, Simon Peter, after his first interview with Jesus, "We have found the Messiah" (John i. 41), and of Philip, on the day following, to Nathanael, "We have found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write," we naturally and necessarily infer that in these instances Jesus must have said enough to them of prophecy and of His fulfilment of it, to warrant them in pronouncing Him the Messiah.

3. To the charge that His teaching contradicted the Scriptures, He replied, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." (Matt. v. 17.) And when He had read the sixty-first chapter of Isaiah in the public service of the

Inference
from words
of Andrew
and Philip.

Reply of
Jesus to the
charge that
His teach-
ings con-
tradicted
Scripture.

Synagogue at Nazareth, He said to the villagers among whom He had been brought up, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

4. The allusion of Jesus to the miracle or sign of Jonas in the whale's belly as emblematic of the miracle or sign of His own burial and resurrection (Matt. xii. 40), and His allusion to the stone rejected by the builders and becoming the head of the corner, are not so much instances of evidence adduced from prophecy as they are illustrations from Old Testament history.

5. A complete and comprehensive explanation of the relation of Jesus to prophecy and

Relation of Jesus to prophecy not ex- plained till after His resurrec- tion.	His fulfilment of it was not made by Him till after His resurrection. But He made it on the afternoon and evening of the very day of His resurrection. And the language employed in
---	---

His explanation seems very clearly to imply that He had already before His crucifixion said enough of prophecy and the necessity of His fulfilling it, to have made things clear to minds not too much beclouded by self-interest and by erroneous conceptions of the nature of the kingdom He had come to earth to establish.

6. When the minds of the Apostles had been sufficiently clarified in respect to evidence from

Apostles' use of prophecy.	prophecy, they made haste to use it with frequency and force. The Gospel of Matthew abounds in citations of
----------------------------------	---

prophecies fulfilled in the life of Jesus; and John in his Gospel (xii. 37-41) cites Isaiah liii. 1, "Who hath believed our report?" as having been fulfilled by the Jews who had refused to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. The use made of prophecy by the Apostles in the first days of the Church is one of the most notable features of the earlier part of the Acts. The remarkable speech of Stephen wholly turns on the fulfilment of prophecy by Jesus. The Epistle to the Hebrews is simply an elaborate argument from fulfilment of Judaism as a grand whole of prophecy.

PART II.

ORIGINAL EVIDENCES WHICH ARE STILL
AVAILABLE.

SOME of the evidences employed by Jesus and His Apostles carry conviction to honest minds to-day, just as they did when first used. Others having been local, national, temporary, could avail in their original form with those only to whom they were personally presented. To the first of these classes belong the appeals to consciousness; to the second, belong the miracles known to us to have been wrought only through the New Testament accounts of them. The court of the universal consciousness is still open; miracles of world-wide significance and universally intelligible are now addressed by the Church of the Living God to all mankind.

Two classes
of evi-
dences.

CHAPTER I.

THE APPEAL TO CONSCIOUSNESS.

THE self-evidencing power of truth is still as effective as ever in dealing with unbelief. It is even more effective now than when relied on by Jesus and His Apostles. In fact, it is in pulpit apologetics the most effective method of reaching minds whose chief hindrance to becoming Christians is sluggishness and indifference. Christian truth is the voice of God speaking into the ear of the human soul; it is as audibly and as unmistakably Divine as when it called Adam to a consciousness of his sin.

Response
of univer-
sal con-
sciousness
to Chris-
tian truth.

The supposition that Christian truth by its long continuance in the world has lost some of its original freshness and novelty, and so of its power to arrest attention and beget conviction, wholly misconceives the essence of truth. Like human nature, it remains perennially the same through whatever vicissitudes of human society it may pass. Doubtless familiarity with the letter of truth combined with indifference to the spirit of it may fortify against its power of conviction. But as a counterbalance to the hardening effect

of this familiarity and indifference should be borne in mind the influence of Christianity on the common consciousness of all peoples who live under the light of its teachings. This light, even by its reflected shining, irradiates the inner nature, wakening into life the better but dormant qualities of the soul, intensifying and clarifying consciousness itself, and thus imparting a susceptibility to the power of Christian truth such as neither Jew nor Gentile could have possessed when that truth was first proclaimed by Jesus and His Apostles. One of the most convincing evidences of the Divine origin of Christianity to enlightened but unchristian minds in our day is the response of consciousness to its moral and religious teaching.

CHAPTER II.

EVIDENCE FROM MIRACLES.

THE miracles wrought by Jesus and his Apostles were designed for, and fitted to convince, those only for whose benefit they were wrought. They were for Jews only, and for Jews of that day, to facilitate the planting of Christianity among them. There is no evidence that they were designed to carry conviction either to Gentiles or to Jews eighteen hundred years after their occurrence. To attempt in our day to prove the Divine origin of Christianity by the miracles of Jesus is to assume the needless task of proving that the miracles were actually wrought before we can bring them into court to testify. Evidence needing thus to be vouched for as trustworthy hazards the credibility of the thing to be proved.

New Testament miracles intended for their own time.

When there shall be wrought miracles of the same kind as those appealed to by Jesus, or, in fact, of any kind that are equally shown to come directly from the Divine hand, they who witness them will not greatly err if they shall look for other and accompanying evidences of a

new dispensation. According to all Biblical history, miracles were wrought only to authenticate messengers who came with new messages. Old and familiar truths, by whomsoever reiterated, have needed, and now need, no corroboration. Doubtless many marvellous effects are wrought in the human organism simply by a strong faith. The power of the mind over the body sometimes comes startlingly close to a resemblance to Divine power. But to call this mental power miraculous is a misuse of language.

But Christianity as it now exists in the world has its own accompanying miraculous evidences.

The higher
miracle.

Jesus announced them as certain to come, and the New Testament explicitly avows them as existing. One species of miracle was specially promised by Christ Himself. The Apostles and their associates were commissioned and empowered to do the same works which He himself had done, and through their faith in Him as the risen and glorified Lord who had returned to the Father, they were to be enabled to do even greater works than He had wrought,—greater not in degree but in kind. They were to be the instruments in the hand of God of working the moral miracles of raising human souls from the death of sin to a life of righteousness. The moral miracle of the resurrection of a soul from spiritual death shows

forth the glory of God more clearly, if we will but see it, than did the bodily resurrection of the literally dead.

To this kind of miraculous evidence the Apostle Paul frequently alluded. All miracles are, of course, exhibitions of Divine power. Their entire force as evidence lies in the assurance given that the power of God produces them. The Apostle Paul is accordingly very fond of attributing the regenerative process of the Gospel in the soul of man directly to the re-creative power of God. He makes all to be due to "the exceeding greatness of God's power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power (His miraculous agency), which he wrought in Christ when he raised Him from the dead and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places." With Paul it was the power or miraculous interposition of God that raised Jesus from the dead, the same power that rescued and transformed himself from the bitter persecutor to the loving advocate; and to the miracle-loving Jews, he was content to point to Jesus as Himself the "power of God," or miracle they so much craved to see. Among other conspicuous evidences of Christianity we may therefore point to the resurrection of Jesus, the conversion of the Apostle Paul, and the Person and teachings of Jesus.

Paul's
references
to it.

SECTION I. — THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

The resurrection was the last and the climax in the series of the miracles of Jesus. He refers to it as the one finally decisive evidence of His Messiahship (Matt. xii. 40; Luke xxiv. 46; John ii. 18-20). To it above all others the Apostles in the Acts and in their Epistles refer, as the ground of their confidence in Christ as Son of God and Judge of the world, and the basis of their assurance that all His promises would be fulfilled. They were at great pains to state that as Apostles they were specially appointed to be witnesses of the resurrection.

The resurrection is the one miracle of Jesus that must be specially emphasized, and is specially available as evidence to-day. The Apostle Paul makes it to be the fundamental fact in Christianity, — an event on the real occurrence of which Christianity must for all time rest its claim to be a trustworthy religion. According to Paul, if it did not occur the Apostles were false witnesses, and the religion a fraud. Various attempts have been made to explain the account of it in the New Testament records in some other way than by regarding it as a real occurrence. Five theories have been proposed to explain it; these have been severally dis-

nated as the theory of theft, of swoon, of vision, of telegram, and of gradual growth from exaggerated statements of the Apostles' belief in the immortality of Jesus, or of His survival of death.

1. The theft theory is too absurd on the face of it to require refutation. Theft theory.

2. The swoon theory of Paulus, that Jesus, swooning from pain on the cross, was revived by the coolness of the tomb, is more plausible than the theft theory ; but evidence Swoon theory. of actual death seems to have been incontestable. The theory is, moreover, wholly irreconcilable with the character, teachings, and subsequent conduct of the Apostles. The deception implied in the theory could have been maintained only with the connivance, if not actual co-operation of Jesus, an impossible admission, to say nothing of the impossibility of a successful continuance of so stupendous a fraud.

3. The vision theory advocated by Renan, Matthew Arnold, Prof. T. H. Green, and others, is still more plausible than the swoon Vision theory. theory, but is indefensible. (a) The Apostles had visual and tactual evidence, "many infallible proofs," of the real bodily presence of Jesus after the resurrection. (b) The Apostles, overwhelmed and dismayed by the crucifixion of Jesus, were in no state of mind for such visions, and were incredulous at the first report of His resurrection. (c) The Apostle Paul says

he saw Jesus (1 Cor. ix. 1), and he distinguishes between his seeing Jesus and his subsequent visions (Acts xxii. 17, 18; 2 Cor. xii. 1-8). (d) The hallucination of visions intensifies itself in those subject to them till there comes an end to it in exhaustion and disappointment, whereas with the Apostles Christ's appearances soon ceased and ended in settled convictions,¹ a complete transformation of their ideas, aims, and expectations, and in arousing them to achievements which nothing but the clear-seeing and deep-seated faith of cool-headed men can account for.

4. Keim's theory of "telegram from heaven" is, that the spirit of Jesus from the other world reported itself to the Apostles in a visual, bodily form, — a species of materialization.² The aim of the theory is to account

¹ Keim says (Vol. VI. p. 356): "The visions not only came to an end, they even made way for a diametrically opposite mental current." He concludes an extended critical examination of the vision theory with these words: "If there was actually an early, an immediate transition from the visions to a calm self-possession and to a self-poised energy, then the visions did not proceed from self-generated visionary over excitement and fanatical agitation among the multitude. . . . All the before-mentioned considerations compel us to admit that the theory is only an hypothesis which, while it explains something, leaves the main fact unexplained, and indeed subordinates what is historically attested to weak and untenable views."

² See Keim's *Jesus of Nazara* (Ransom's translation), Vol. VI. pp. 359-364.

for the transformation of the Apostles from despair at the crucifixion to the triumphant exaltation they afterwards exhibited; but it does violence to the Gospel narrative, and gives no explanation of what became of the real body of Jesus.

5. The gradual growth theory of Martineau is, that the Apostles believed so strongly in the continued existence of the spirit of Jesus after the crucifixion, and so emphasized this belief, that they came in due time to have visions of him as risen, and to affirm that they had seen him; ^{Gradual growth theory} ¹ thus giving rise to traditions of the resurrection which were incorporated in the Gospels; — a theory which can be maintained only on the assumption that the Gospels are neither genuine nor trustworthy.

The direct evidence of the resurrection of Jesus may be summarized as follows: —

1. The four Gospels detail with minuteness the circumstances accompanying the resurrection; the Apostles make it the first and foremost fact in all their preaching, never failing to give it prominence, whomsoever they might be addressing; and the conspicuous recognition of it in every part of the New Testament, whatever the subject under discussion, bespeaks at

¹ See Martineau's *Seat of Authority in Religion*, pp. 363-370.

once the reality of its occurrence and its importance in the scheme of Christianity.

2. The real occurrence of the resurrection can alone account for the sudden transition through which the Apostles passed from the disappointment and utter dismay into which the crucifixion had plunged them into the boldness and exultation exhibited by them on the day of Pentecost and ever afterwards.

3. The resurrection was one of the necessary steps towards a correction of the erroneous conceptions so deeply seated in the Apostles' minds respecting the nature of the kingdom of Christ. During all their attendance on His personal ministry, and even after they were assured of His return from the grave, they were dreaming of a temporal kingdom and of a reign of earthly magnificence. The death on the cross had shattered these hopes; seeing him returned from the grave, their hopes revived. It was only after Jesus had explained the meaning of both the death and the resurrection, that they were enabled to comprehend the kingdom He was to found as a reign of righteousness and as the conservation of spiritual life among men. The resurrection was the midway fact between the sacrificial death of Christ and His ascension to the throne of the universe. It was the one de-

Apostles' change of feeling after the resurrection.

Corrects Apostles' notions of the kingdom of Christ.

cisive event which proved at once the Divine origin of His religion and its power to save the souls of those who believe in it.

4. The resurrection alone furnishes the key to a complete understanding of the New Testament as a whole, and to an understanding of the philosophical consistency of its parts as a system of theological and ethical thought. The death of the

A key to the understanding of the New Testament.

Son of God without a resurrection would have left an unbridged chasm in the theology of the New Testament, and the death, as a procuring cause in human redemption, without a resurrection, would have been neither effective nor intelligible.

5. If Jesus did not rise from the grave, no reasonable account can be given of the existence of the Christian Church. Without the resurrection, it is impossible to explain the sudden exchange on the part of the Apostles' minds of their

Explains existence of the Christian Church.

long cherished materialistic notions of the Messianic kingdom for the spiritual principles announced by them on the day of Pentecost. But with the resurrection and the repeated interviews of the Apostles with their Master after that event, of which we have accounts in the last chapter of the Gospel of Luke and the first chapter of the Acts, all becomes clear.

The resurrection alone can explain the recalling of the Apostles from the dispersion and hiding into which the crucifixion had driven them, and the holding them in waiting for the outpouring of the Spirit, — the Spirit without whose promised guidance the Church could never have been organized. If Christ did not rise from the grave, then the Apostles must have conspired in hiding His body and in proclaiming the most aimless falsehood ever set afloat by man. That men capable of such conspiring, deception, and falsehood, could have organized the Christian Church, making it the embodiment of the moral and religious principles they taught, is a supposition too foolish to be thought of. So far as any mind can now see, had not Jesus Christ risen from the dead all that He had said and done and suffered would have speedily passed into a fading reminiscence of a great and transient light.

6. The conversion of the Apostle Paul turned on the appearance to him of the risen Jesus.

Conversion
of the
Apostle
Paul.

Whatever else may have been requisite to his conversion, the Apostle himself always referred to his arrest on the way to Damascus by the risen, personal Jesus as the efficient cause of it. So sudden and so overwhelmingly surprising was the appearance, and so astounded was he by it, that for three

days he "neither did eat nor drink." The resurrection to him was the most absolutely certain of facts, — a fact on which he staked the whole truth of Christianity, — and by it, he assures us in the beginning of his Epistle to the Romans, Jesus Christ was declared to be "the Son of God with power."

7. The resurrection of Jesus was necessary as a ground of assurance to the faith of those putting their trust in Him. No amount of promise could suffice to win faith in one as a Helper in a future world who had gone into the grave and had given no evidence of His survival of death. Jesus was "raised again for our justification," and by His resurrection our faith in Him is justified. His resurrection was necessary to demonstrate the reality of a future life, and to assure us of our own resurrection to participate in the life eternal.

Resurrec-
tion neces-
sary as a
ground of
faith.

SECTION II. — CONVERSION OF THE APOSTLE PAUL.

This naturally follows the resurrection of Jesus, and is inseparably connected with it as evidence of the divine origin of Christianity. Its evidential value is seen from the following considerations: —

Evidential
value of the
conversion
of Paul.

1. As we have already stated, the conversion of the Apostle Paul, in the accounts he gives of

it and in the allusions he makes to it, is always
Effected by
appearance
of Christ. declared to have been instrumentally
 effected by the appearance to him of
 the once crucified but risen Christ.

2. Paul had been carefully bred in the Jewish
 religion, and was profoundly versed in its histo-
A scrupu-
lous Jew. ry, prophecies, and requirements. He
 was most devoutly loyal to his religion,
 practising its requirements with utmost scrupu-
 losity. A fiery zealot in defending it, he resorted
 to the most violent measures in punishment of
 any apostasy from it as from the one and only
 religion of God.

3. Up to the time of his conversion he was
 convinced that the Christian religion was an
Determined
to destroy
Chris-
tianity iniquitous scheme, which it would be
 an acceptable service to God to an-
 nihilate, and whose adherents he was
 determined, if possible, to exterminate.

4. There was nothing in the Christian Church
 which could possibly appeal to any selfish mo-
No appeal
to selfish-
ness. tive to induce a change in his estimate
 of it, or in his temper towards it. On
 the contrary, its spirit, its interpreta-
 tion of the prophets, its antagonism to Pharisa-
 ism, and its loyalty to the sacrificed Jesus, all
 conspired to repel him, and to stimulate his zeal
 against it.

5. Identification of himself with Christians,
 even if he had seen anything attractive among

them, would have necessitated the sacrifice of the highest possible prospects that could then lie before a young and ambitious Jew of Paul's ability and attainments. He well knew that "making havoc of the Church" was directly in the line of service which was sure to procure advancement and bring the most coveted prizes of life.

6. Granting all that can be claimed for natural causes in Paul's change of mind, and doubtless not a little was due to them, they cannot account for the suddenness and completeness of his transformation. The speech of Stephen, we may well suppose, had made a strong impression on him. Reflections on the reasonableness of Stephen's Scripture interpretations, and on the contrast of his own spirit with that of the dying martyr, could hardly have failed to awaken a conflict of feeling, and to create a distrust of the fitness of his errand to Damascus. It is not necessary, however, to interpret the words, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," as referring to compunctions of conscience and an inward conflict which culminated in an ecstatic vision of the once crucified but now glorified Jesus.¹ It

Sacrifice of
interests.

Only super-
natural
causes can
account for
his conver-
sion.

¹ The theory that Paul's conversion was due, not to the actual appearance to him of the glorified Christ, but to a mental conflict which had resulted in a state of ecstasy and of a self-generated vision, fails to meet all the conditions stated

better accords with all the circumstances of the case to suppose the words to refer to his resistance to the Divine Providence that was leading him onward towards fulfilment of the great part assigned him in the kingdom of Christ. No satisfactory explanation of the condition of the blinded and praying Saul, and his speedy preaching of the Jesus whose disciples he had come to Damascus to slaughter, can be suggested except that

Transfor-
mation of
character.

or implied in the Apostle's own accounts of the occurrence. The theory which can claim the advocacy of distinguished names, such as Baur, Martineau, and Prof. T. H. Green, however anxious to rid the Apostle's conversion of the supernatural, has succeeded in securing for the hypothesis the support of all the facts narrated by Paul himself. Bernhard Weiss, in his "Life of Christ," very justly says (Vol. III. pp. 412, 413, translation): "What renders the assumption of a mere vision impossible is the way in which Paul refers to his experience near Damascus, as being of an altogether singular character (1 Cor. ix. 1, xv. 8). There is no doubt that Paul had frequent visions, and was subject to ecstatic conditions, in which he heard heavenly voices and saw himself removed from earth. This appearance of Christ, however, he joyfully acknowledges to be both the attestation of his position as an apostle (1 Cor. ix. 1) and the cause of his conversion (Gal. i.). . . . All that we can say with certainty is, that Paul did not, like the primitive apostles, behold Jesus in his human body, but in a form of light, and that this form he heard speaking to him." Weiss also adds, that if, in opposition to this, appeal be made to the Epistle to the Galatians (i. 16), which expressly mentions an inward revelation, it should be remembered that a "sensuously observable appearance" must have been accompanied by an inward revelation.

which he himself has given, viz. the appearance to him of the risen Jesus.

7. A religion that could transform the bitterly persecuting Saul into the loving and self-denying Paul, carrying him thereafter onward in spite of the deadliest opposition and persecution with an ever deepening love for God and man, gives strong evidence of being a religion of Divine origin, as well as of Divine power.

8. The Apostle Paul had more than thirty years of the most diversified experience in his Christian ministry. His personal sufferings and spiritual conflicts were incessant. It is hardly credible that he should have been so absolutely certain as he was of God's presence and guidance throughout the whole, if the religion he preached had not had a supernatural origin, and had not been the medium of constant communion with the supernatural world.

His endurance of sufferings and other trials.

9. The Divine origin and the superhuman power of the Christian religion are seen in its influence on the character of the Apostle Paul throughout his long continued possession and exercise of the Apostolic power. From the necessities of the case his Apostolic authority was absolute, and in constant exercise. Unrestrained exercise of any kind of power naturally begets arbitrariness and tyranny. In Paul the unrestrained exercise

Use of his Apostolic power.

of Apostolic authority begat an almost womanly tenderness and gentleness. On occasion, he could be as stern and implacable as Justice incarnate; but he was always ready to sacrifice himself for others, and his heart overflowed with love.

SECTION III. — PERSON AND TEACHINGS OF JESUS.

Christianity, whether regarded as a body of truth or as spirit and life, originated with Jesus Christ. He was it in Himself, and He taught it in His words. We may, therefore, rightfully look for the stamp of its Divinity alike in His Person and in His teachings.

Sinless per-
fection of
Jesus.

I. *His Person*. — The New Testament portraiture of Jesus is that of a sinless and ideally perfect person. The most opposite virtues unite in Him and harmonize. No single virtue overtops and dwarfs others. Every one is duly proportioned to every other. The united whole constitutes the one and only example the world has yet seen of a perfect manhood.

And this is not alone the portraiture of the four Gospels. The Acts and the Epistles present it with equal distinctness. The difference is only one of method. The Gospels depict it in biographical sketches. In the Acts and Epistles sinless perfection is dogmatically af-

firmed. But all alike agree in setting Jesus forth as absolutely faultless,—a Person so measurelessly apart from the rest of the race as to be nothing less than miraculous.

Whence, then, came to the New Testament writers this conception of Jesus? Are they truthful historians, or have they warped history to make it conform to a preconceived ideal? If we accept the latter alternative, whence came the ideal? To these questions it must be replied:—

1. There is no evidence whatever that the Messiah was expected to be a perfect Being. And if such had been the expectation and the four Gospels had been written to prove that the expectation was realized, they would have been very different documents from those which we have. Biographies written to prove a perfect character would have inevitably betrayed their purpose, whereas in the Gospels the perfect character of Jesus is only incidentally, though clearly, disclosed.

Sinless perfection not expected in the Messiah by the Jews.

2. If we suppose sinless perfection to have been an afterthought with the first Christians, it is hardly possible that this origin of it should not be discernible in the mode of its adjustment to the facts of Christ's life. But it never is introduced as something to be inferred from, or to be regarded as

Not an afterthought of the first Christians.

explanatory of, what He had said, or Himself was; it always comes out as an inevitable revelation of His inner nature.

3. No explanation of the origin of the New Testament idea of the sinless perfection of Jesus

Not an invention of the Apostles.

can stand the test of criticism except that which supposes it to have been derived from the life of Jesus Himself.

Artists, literary as well as others, are helpless without models. It is hardly conceivable that a single Evangelist could, out of his own imagination, have depicted the perfect Jesus. But that the writers of the four Gospels, to say nothing of the rest of the New Testament authors, should have so completely agreed in their pictures of Jesus without a real original, is to suppose nothing less than a literary miracle. The truth is, the Synoptists recorded what they themselves had seen, and the traditions of the whole Church. The Apostle John formed his entire Gospel on his own knowledge of Jesus, derived from the most intimate of personal relations with Him.

4. The sinless perfection and matchless moral dignity of Jesus become the more apparent and

More wonderful from two considerations.

wonderful when we take into account two considerations. The first is, His humble birth, His occupation, and His entire social environment. Nothing in these can in any way account for what He evidently was. He was the product of more than natural causes.

In the Divine economy second causes are never permitted to hide the efficient Cause that stands behind them. The second consideration is, that Jesus possessed a true human nature derived from His mother. In that nature "He was tempted in all points like as we are." It was a nature susceptible of temptations in the wilderness. And yet He was unapproachably superior to the acknowledged religious leaders of His own time and of all time. Once for all, He was a realization of the ideally perfect man; He was a living Miracle. -

5. Jesus apparently was not conscious of His Messiahship till at, or after, His baptism. This consciousness, however, was afterwards explicitly avowed, and sinlessness claimed by Him (John viii. 46). No consistent explanation of this claim and avowal is possible except on the ground of their reality

Conscious-
ness of
Messiah-
ship after
baptism.

6. An absolutely sinless character in the Founder of Christianity may easily be shown, both theologically and ethically, to have been necessary to its completeness as a system of religion. Theologically the Christian religion becomes effective in accomplishing its end only through faith in Jesus as a faultless Sufferer in our behalf. Faith in one as a helper whose sufferings might have been suspected of being due

Sinlessness
of Jesus
necessary
theologi-
cally and
ethically.

to his own faults would, of course, have been abortive. Ethically, Jesus is the example whom we are always to follow. Only a perfect being can safely be presented to men as their ideal and pattern. These theological and ethical necessities, however, are never so much as hinted at by New Testament writers, and cannot, therefore, be referred to as explaining their portraiture of Jesus as perfect. It has been only through a progressive and philosophico-theological exposition of Christianity as a whole, that the fitness and necessity of a perfect character in Jesus have become fully apparent.¹

II. *The Teachings of Jesus.* — In appealing to the teachings of Jesus as evidence of the supernatural origin of His religion, it is not claimed that nothing taught by Him had never been taught by any one else. It is not difficult to parallel many of His ethical sayings by citations from Old Testament prophets, from Apocryphal and Rabbinical writings, and even from heathen writings like those of Plato, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. What

Teachings
of Jesus
unmixed
with error.

¹ "All other religious men go into the presence of God with a cry for pardon. But he who dies upon the cross never sobs out, 'Father, forgive me.' Theology may be right in arguing from this to the highest holiness. The absence of all confession may imply a Divine Humanity; it is fatal to a human humanity." — Columbia College Lectures, Primary Convictions, p. 83. By William Alexander, D.D., Bishop of Derry and Raphoe.

we can and do claim is, that Jesus taught a system of religion and ethics unequalled by any religion before His time or since, and that in it He taught truth unmixed with error. On this truth stands the legible stamp of its Divine origin. If the truth is from a superhuman source, so also is the religion that embodies and illustrates it. Notice:—

1. The absolute originality of the two most elementary and yet most comprehensive principles in the whole body of Christian truth,—the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Not a people on earth recognized either of these principles *in the Christian sense of it*, when first they were uttered by Jesus. To the Jew every man not of his race was a dog, to the Greek the foreigner was a barbarian, and to the Roman every alien was fit only for Roman enslavement. To-day among all enlightened peoples the Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man are the commonplaces of the Christian religion and accepted as self-evident.

Originality
of the two
most com-
prehensive
truths of
Christian-
ity.

2. No well supported proof can be adduced of a natural and human origin of other more distinctive principles of Christianity. Striking passages can be gathered from writings of the Maccabean period, and from the so called Apocalyptic and Wisdom literature of the age imme-

Other dis-
tinctive
principles
taught by
Him.

diately preceding the birth of Jesus, and these may have sustained to His teachings a relation not unlike that of the reddening dawn to the rising sun; but there is not a fragment of evidence that He had even a hearsay acquaintance with these, much less that He read them and borrowed from them. Among people of His rank and social level, religious life and thinking were of the dreariest. His teaching was to all classes alike astonishing and unaccountable. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" was the common inquiry. If He was familiar with the Apocalyptic and Wisdom literature of His time, or with earlier Stoical writers, it is not credible that some among His hearers should not also have been familiar with them, and, knowing His indebtedness, should not have exposed Him as a plagiarist.

3. Let the simple facts speak. A peasant-born Jew, bred and toiling as a mechanic, acquainted with none other of the literatures of the world than the Jewish Scriptures, at thirty years of age gives to the world a body of moral and religious truth which more than eighteen centuries of severest criticism and practical testing have utterly failed to invalidate, or in any degree to discredit, and which now, more than ever, is proving its fitness to be the one universal religion. A religion standing thus apart from, and

His teachings have stood the test of ages.

superior to, all others, gives evidence, if evidence can be given, of having originated with the Supreme Mind of the universe, and of being fitted to fulfil the ultimate end for which the universe exists.

4. The final commission of Jesus to the Apostles, to evangelize the whole world, implies on His part an assured consciousness of having given to them truth, absolute, immutable, and unqualified. What He was conscious of, history is vindicating with an increasing distinctness.

He imparted absolute truth.

5. Nothing in the Apostolic development of Christianity, or in the subsequent unfolding of the Apostles' exposition of it, has added to, or withdrawn from, the substance of what was given in the person, in the deeds, and in the oral instructions of Jesus. He Himself was all that He required His disciples to become,—was the Divine incarnated. The development of Christianity has been simply a disclosure of the hidden nature of the Divine-human Jesus.

Himself the Divine Incarnation of truth.

CHAPTER III.

EVIDENCE FROM PROPHECY.

IN treating of Prophecy under Part First, we saw that Jesus declared Himself to have come into the world to fulfil both the Law and the Prophets, and, on a given occasion at Nazareth He assured His fellow townsmen that one very striking prophecy of Isaiah was then and there being fulfilled; and after His resurrection, He immediately pointed out to His disciples that His life and death had been necessary to fulfil what the Prophets had written concerning Him. On this teaching of their Master, the Apostles and their associates at once proceeded to enlarge. They represented Judaism as foretelling, alike in its institutions and in its Sacred Scriptures, the coming of a religion far better than itself, and, especially, the coming of One anointed of God, who should build up the new religion out of the old. Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms are all appealed to as prophesying of this new religion and its Founder; and their prophecies are claimed to have been fulfilled in the person and the work of Jesus. In fact, the New Testament viewed in its relation to the Old Testa-

Fulfilments
of prophecy
recorded in
New Testa-
ment.

ment is throughout a detailed fulfilment of the prophecies and predictions found in the Old Testament Scriptures.

And yet the New Testament contains only specimens¹ of the prophecies and predictions that were fulfilled in the person, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus. Prophecies subsequent to the Apostles. Such only are mentioned as the specific topic treated of by each speaker or writer called for. Intimations, however, are not wanting that others might be cited; and in the light of those given, it is not difficult to interpret the others. Under this light writers subsequent to the Apostles proceeded to cite other fulfilments. Examples of this are found in the Epistle of Barnabas, written according to Delitzsch between the years 70 and 120; in Justin Martyr's Dialogue with Trypho the Jew, written between the years 140 and 148, and in St. Augustine's "City of God," written near the beginning of the fifth century. With these and many other writers of the earlier centuries, predominance among the evidences of the Divine origin of

¹ "The New Testament references to Old Testament prophecies are limited, rather accidentally than designedly, by the occasion afforded in the Gospel history and the apostolic trains of thought. Hence it has come to pass that many Messianic passages of prime importance have remained unnoticed, e. g. Isaiah ix. 6, 7; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Zech. vi. 12, 13." Delitzsch, *Messianic Prophecies*, § 10. Compare Riehm's *Messianic Prophecy*, Part III., p. 222 of Muirhead's translation.

Christianity was given to Prophecy. And it was not alone to Messianic prophecies that those who wrote for Gentile readers gave attention. They dwelt also on the large range of prophecies relating to foreign peoples, and to the Jewish nation and to God's dealing with it; lines of argument still available, and, when rightly considered, not easily set aside. Thus we have fulfilments of prophecies against Assyria and Babylon and Moab; and of the special predictions of disaster to the kingdoms of Israel and Syria who had formed an alliance against Judah; and of the overthrow of the army of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, when laying siege to Jerusalem. But as evidence of the Divine origin of Christianity the Messianic prophecies are more in point, and the fulfilment of these is more demonstrably clear.

Various causes have contributed to the depreciation of the value of Prophecy as one of the Christian evidences. The earliest and most active of these was the uncritical habit of finding fulfilments in support of preconceived systems of thought, a treatment of the Sacred Scriptures which Biblical criticism has not been slow in exposing as an abuse of them. Rationalism, availing itself of Biblical criticism and adopting a rigid grammatico-historical method of interpretation, has been prompt in its endeavors to show

Deprecia-
tion of
Prophecy
through un-
critical
treatment.

that prophecies, Messianic and all alike, afford no evidence of a supernatural origin, but may be otherwise and easily accounted for. Thus some of the prophecies, it says, are no more than the forecasting of political or ethical sagacity; certain Messianic predictions, when compared with their fulfilment in Christ, are declared to be only fortunate coincidences between what had been uttered originally of Jewish functionaries and what had occurred in the personal history of Jesus; and when all other methods fail of evading the force of the argument from the fulfilment of Messianic prediction in the life and death and resurrection of Christ, rationalism does not hesitate to affirm that the predictions must have been written after the occurrence of the events predicted. But Biblical learning and criticism advance with an ever widening knowledge of Jewish history and with an ever deepening insight into the nature of the Messianic prophecies, and of their connection with the whole of the Jewish religion. The more sober critics are fast coming to see with equal distinctness the mistake of theorists who would find in the fulfilment of prophecies a justification of preconceived notions, and the far greater mistake of rationalists who refuse to see traces of anything supernatural in any of the Old Testament prophets. The truth is, the more thoroughly the

Attempt of
Rational-
ism to deny
Prophecy.

Jewish religion is studied and its Sacred Scriptures are understood, the clearer becomes the evidence that throughout, from the beginning onward, there were an ever growing promise and expectancy of a coming of something better than had at any time been attained or attainable, and that the introduction and consummation of all should be through the coming of the Priest and King anointed of God to found a Kingdom of Righteousness that should know no end.

The argument in support of the Divine origin of Christianity from the fulfilment of the Messi-

Prophecy
as evidence
more con-
vincing to-
day than
ever be-
fore.

anic prophecies was never more convincing to ingenuous minds than it is to-day. Biblical criticism, so confidently relied on to destroy the argument from prophecy, has only served to show its impregnability. Precedence has been given it over any other kind of proof. Miracles of power, of whatever description, can be effective and convincing to those only on whom, or before whom, they are wrought. Their evidence is necessarily both local and transient; and their effectiveness as evidence can be added to neither by repetition nor by multiplication. Too many of them would weaken it. As everyday occurrences, they would cease to be evidence at all. But prophecies — miracles of knowledge — are limited neither to place nor

to time. Once uttered and fulfilled, the voice goes sounding along the centuries, ever gaining in articulateness and emphasis wherever the light of Christianity is shining. Fulfilment gives to the words of the prophets the character of living witnesses. The oftener any single prophecy is fulfilled,—and fulfilments may be repeated,—the oftener the testimony of the witnesses is heard; and the more there are of prophecies fulfilled, the greater the number of the witnesses to testify. The whole Christian world now testifies to the truth of the predictions of the old prophets of Judea.

In appealing, however, to Old Testament prophecy as Christian evidence, regard must be had to the manifest distinction between "type"¹ and "prophecy," and between prophecy in the broader sense of outline of the future and prophecy in the narrower sense of prediction

Distinction
between
"type" and
"prophecy."

¹ "By type we understand the inadequate presentation of a divine idea which is to be more perfectly realized afterwards. The Spirit of God not only reveals Himself in definite words which He suggests to consecrated seers; He also rules in history, shaping it with significant reference to the future. . . . As to the type, the rule is that it is known as such only by the appearance of the antitype, in which it is fulfilled, except where it has been explained in its prefigurative significance by prophetic speech. It is fulfilled when the idea imperfectly hinted in it has found its adequate exposition in realization."—Orelli's *Old Testament Prophecy*, §§ 5 and 7, pp. 37, 38, and 54. See also Briggs's *Messianic Prophecies*, § 19.

of persons and events; and, more than all, to the difference between the major function of the prophets as preachers of righteousness and their minor function as seers and proclaimers of the future. These distinctions bear on the question of proof as derived from prophecy. Thus the Jews were an elect people chosen of God from among the nations, not for their own sakes, but for the accomplishment of Divine ends. The ends were moral and religious, and were attainable only in an indeterminate future, and by means not then intelligible. Of these ends, under one aspect or another of them, every office and every office-holder among the Jews was a type, and to them every rite, ceremony, and ordinance of their religion symbolically pointed. Their whole life was one of awaiting expectancy,—of eager longing for the coming of something better. For the attainment of the better, obedience was inexorably required to the moral statutes under which Moses had placed them at the beginning of their national life. Enforcement of moral obligation, of obedience to the Sovereign Will of the infinitely Holy One whose chosen people they were, was the one great function of their prophets. They were the recognized preachers of righteousness. In performing this function, they necessarily denounced national iniquities, and forewarned of national judgments which were sure to ensue.

From contemplation of national perversity and the national ruin induced by it, the prophetic mind turned naturally to the promises of the great future which had been given to Abraham and Moses and David. Within these promises the Omniscient Spirit that guided them — the “Spirit of Christ” Peter called it — opened their eyes to see what they have prophetically depicted. On the dark background of threatened judgments they painted in glowing colors their pictures of an ultimate endless reign of righteousness and peace. Out from amid the gloom of impending calamities they saw and pictured the righteous King, Founder of the endless kingdom.

In adducing fulfilment of Prophecy, furthermore, as Christian evidence, caution is to be exercised not to fall into the mistake of trying to find too minute a meaning in all the symbolical imagery in which the prophecy is couched. Against this two considerations should warn us. The first is a lack of information on our part for such interpretation. Each prophet’s imagery and phraseology were determined by his individual endowments and experiences, and reflected his own time and surroundings. Of all these, our knowledge is too meagre to warrant minuteness of interpretation, even if it be admitted that minuteness of meaning was in the prophet’s

Cautions
against too
minute in-
terpreta-
tions of
Prophecy.

mind. A second consideration is, that the symbolical imagery and incidental language of a prophecy are not so essential to its meaning as to require, or even to admit of, a minutely exact interpretation. To insist on such interpretation is no more reasonable than to insist on finding doctrinal meaning in the mere drapery of the New Testament parables. In using parables, Jesus had a single and definite purpose in each of them. Except as drapery, or setting for that purpose or end, the drapery had no meaning. In like manner, the symbolical imagery and incidental terms of the Old Testament seer, except as drapery or setting for the single event or person he was foretelling, were without significance. The various and often conflicting meanings that persons of vivid fancies have thought themselves justified in extracting from prophetic imagery, have brought the whole argument from prophecy into unmerited disrepute. They throw distrust on the prophets by trying to make out a great deal more than was pretended to be seen. The New Testament, in its citations of fulfilled prophecy, affords no illustration of this misuse of them.

In using the prophetic argument, it is also not to be forgotten that prophecies, especially the

Messianic prophecies not spo- radic, but a connected series.	Messianic, did not occur as sporadic and isolated outbursts of the prophetic spirit. They were a connected series constituting an organic whole. They
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are a clearly definable integer of Jewish history, and form, in fact, the core of it. They reveal as nothing else does, or can, the Divine purpose in rearing and training the Jewish people, and the connection of that purpose with the broader and eternal purpose of human redemption.¹ Towards a fulfilment of the broader and eternal purpose, every prophet was made to contribute his quota, and his quota was determined by his position in the prophetic line. Select whatever item we may of his Messianic predictions, its full meaning becomes clear only as we look at it in the light of the whole series of Messianic prophecies. The argument from prophecy in Christian evidences, like the argument from design in Natural Theology, becomes conclusive only when the instance of design selected to reason from is seen to be simply a unit of a complex but unified whole.

¹ "When we consider that the prophets were linked in a chain, and that their predictions are combined in a system,—an organic whole which no individual prophet could possibly comprehend, which now stands before the scholarly world in marvellous unity and variety as the object of the study of the ages of the past, which absorbs the energies of the present, and which arches the future even to the end of the world,—we are forced to the conviction that the one Master of the Hebrew prophets was the Spirit of God, and that the organic system of prophecy is a product of the mind and will of God."—Briggs's *Messianic Prophecies*, § 16, p. 42. Compare Riehm's *Messianic Prophecy*, Part II., and Orelli's *Old Testament Prophecy*, § 3.

As in the material universe, the countless adjustments of parts to one another and to the unified whole proclaim unmistakably a foreseeing and presiding Intelligence, so in the great whole of Messianic prophecies, the manifold adjustments of single predictions to one another and to the unified whole proclaim, with equal or with greater distinctness, a foreseeing and foretelling Divine Intelligence; and as in the material universe it is impossible to resist the conviction that within the whole has always dwelt the Supreme Directive Mind, so in Hebrew prophecy it is equally impossible to resist the conviction that within the whole the Supreme Mind has always presided and directed. God is equally immanent in human history and in the material universe.

Nor does it invalidate the foregoing to admit that there are prophecies in the Old Testament

Prophecies which have not been fulfilled, and now
which have never can be, the nations to whom they
not been referred having passed utterly away.¹
fulfilled.

When national or individual sins, against which penal woes were announced to be forthcoming, ceased, and were followed by repentance, as

¹ "The fulfilment of prophecies depends, of course, as a rule, upon further conditions, expressed or tacitly assumed, which belong to the sphere of human freedom, and hence many a prophecy, though announced in the Spirit of God, may remain unfulfilled."—Riehm's *Messianic Prophecy*, Part III., p. 223 (Muirhead's translation).

was the case with Nineveh and the prediction of Jonah, and with Hezekiah and the prediction of Micah, (see Jeremiah xxvi. 18, 19, Micah iii. 12, and 2 Chron. xxxii. 26,) the predictions of course became inoperative. Other Old Testament prophecies may not for like reasons — reasons not recorded as were the prophecies — have been fulfilled. In prophecy, furthermore, as in universal nature, provision is vastly in excess of the supply needed for specific ends. Nature is intent on perpetuating every species of life existing within her domain. To this end she has provided every plant, tree, and animal with self-perpetuating seeds; but the seeds are immeasurably in excess of all that are needed for reproduction. Prophecies were doubtless in excess of the number that were either expected or intended to be explicitly fulfilled.

The prophetic element is not alone found in the Old Testament. The New Testament also had its prophecies and its predictions.

Jesus not only predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, but many things respecting the kingdom he had come to earth to establish. The entire New Testament abounds also in predictions of His second coming. Its prophetic warnings against apostasy and against recreancy in the performance of duty, throw floods of light on what has already transpired,

New Tes-
tament
Prophecies.

or is now transpiring, in the history of the Church. In fact, the whole New Testament was, when composed, quite as much a forecast of the future as it was a record of what had passed, or was then passing. It is largely by its prophetic character that it to-day throws so much light on personal duty, and becomes to every one who devoutly consults it the source at once of illuminative truth and of quickening energy.

Against the misuse of Scripture prophecies now awaiting fulfilment, it is hardly possible to protest too earnestly. They can have for us no bearing whatever as evidence on the question of the Divine origin of the Christian religion, and they are sadly mis-used when attempts are made to forestall their fulfilments by showing just what these must be,¹ when meanings are put into them in support of preconceived theories, and when they are interpreted as telling us the how, the when, and the

Misuse of
Scripture
Prophecies.

¹ "The great symbols of Hebrew predictive prophecy remained riddles of comfort and warning — all the more dread from their profound and awful mystery — until they were resolved by the events predicted. The first advent is the first great resolver of all Old Testament prophecy. Jesus opened the understanding of His Apostles that they might understand the Scriptures. The second advent will give the key to New Testament prophecy. It is the Lamb that has been slain, the everlasting and blessed One who alone opens the sealed book, solves the riddles of time, and resolves the symbols of prophecy." — Briggs's *Messianic Prophecies*, § 19, p. 49.

where of the occurrence of certain events foretold and definitely expected. Of all wastes of time and misuses of Scripture, few, if any, have proved so radically mischievous as attempts to interpret unfulfilled prophecy. Strange that more than two thousand years of failure in such attempts do not deter men from persisting in them. Only when their meaning has been "writ large" in the actual occurrences of history is that meaning fully intelligible, and only then is it available as proof that Christianity is from God.

CHAPTER IV.

EVIDENCE FROM CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE.

THIS, in its initial stage, is not unlike the evidence relied on when there is simply an appeal to consciousness, but in its fulness, it includes much more. In the first, there is merely a response elicited to the self-evidencing power of truth, — a response which is more or less immediate on presentation of truth; the second is a practical testing of truth by honestly accepting it and sincerely complying with its requirements, a testing that may be more or less progressive and protracted. The validity of the proof from experience is made apparent by a variety of considerations: —

I. A religion to get itself established among men must satisfy some at least of the wants of the human soul. A religion which is to win for itself the confidence of men as of Divine origin in a sense that no other is, and as having exclusive authority from God, must show itself equal to a supply of every existing, and of every developed, need of every human soul. The Christian finds that no want of his soul, however deep, or subtile, or urgent, or progressively ca-

pacious, is unprovided for in Christianity. The more completely and the longer he tests its provisions, the more profoundly he becomes convinced of its Divine origin and authority. There are religions, gross in their ideas of God and burdened with superstitions and puerile conceptions of the duties and destinies of man, whose adherents accept them as divine because they think their souls' wants satisfied. And doubtless the more immediate and superficial of these — the allaying of their fears of the future, and the assurance of the favor of their deities — are satisfied. But for a thousand other latent needs of which they are unaware, no provision is made.

Every need
of the soul
provided
for in Chris-
tianity.

Christianity, on the other hand, is a religion that not only allays fears and reconciles with Deity, but takes every one who accepts it under its immediate tuition, and proceeds at once to enlighten him and to train him to a standard of personal perfection as found in the Author of Christianity; and, in the light of that perfection, it discloses to him his own deficiencies and deeper needs. It surrounds him with every needed inducement to advance in self-improvement and proffers all needed aid in his striving for it. To quicken him in his striving, it brings him into fellowship with the Supreme Being, with the Son of God, and with the select spirits of the universe. The farther he advances and the more

completely he avails himself of the resources of his religion, the more clearly he discovers that no emergency arises, and no want of his soul discloses itself, for which his religion has not provided, and for which it does not furnish immediate and ample relief. Its requirements and its promises unite in filling him with the profoundest satisfaction. In his experience the Christian finds an inward and convincing proof of the Divine origin of his holy religion.

2. In becoming a Christian one comes into direct personal communion with Christ, the Author of Christianity, and in Christ, communes with "the Father of the spirits of all flesh." The essence of every religion must consist in an interchange of thought and will (communion) between its deity and his worshipper. The essence of Christianity pre-eminently consists in this interchange; only in Christianity the Deity communed with is a real personal Being. What a religion says to man and requires of him is a message from the deity the religion is supposed to represent. Man's acceptance of the religion and compliance with its requirements is his response to its deity. There is an interchange of thought and will. In Christianity Christ speaks directly to us, and invites to a personal relationship with Himself, and thus with the Eternal Father. His words are revelations of His own

The Chris-
tian comes
into direct
personal
communion
with Deity.

nature, — statements of realities, — and thus are truths. In practically testing these truths the Christian comes into immediate personal relationship with Him who spoke them, — communes with Him. In this communion the Christian has direct and immediate evidence of Christ's personal existence, and thus, of the existence of the Eternal Father. The evidence of an actual interchange of thought and feeling with a real personal Being is not unlike in kind that of an actual interchange between fellow beings. In his experiential testing of Christian truths, — of the words of Christ, — the Christian finds within himself evidence of both the Divine origin and the Divine authority of his Holy Religion.

3. The Christian finds in his consciousness a certification to the Divine origin of his Christian convictions, emotions, and aspirations; and in these, the product of his religion, he also finds certification to its Divine origin. To have become a Christian is to have been born into the Christian consciousness; just as to have been born a human being is to participate in the consciousness common to mankind. In consciousness subject and object must always coexist. Without an object clearly perceived to be distinct from the subject that perceives it, consciousness can never exist. The object thus

Christian
experience
springs
from con-
sciousness
of the love
of Jesus
Christ.

necessarily conditioning the existence of natural consciousness may be a mere sensation, or it may be a thought, an emotion, a purpose; whatever it may be, its origin and its nature are easily discerned. And this is true of objects that necessarily condition the existence of the Christian consciousness; their nature and origin are easily discerned. The Christian is clearly conscious of the origin of his distinctively Christian convictions and emotions, and of his Christian aspirations. Of nothing is he more fully assured than that these deepest and most sacred of the Christian contents of his heart have sprung into being only through knowing and loving Jesus Christ, the Author of the Christian religion.

4. The experience of the Christian so far as relates to the moral and religious teachings of the New Testament is not unlike that through which the speakers and writers of the New Testament must themselves have passed. These speakers and writers, turning over in their minds, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the facts of Christ's Person and works and the words He spoke, experienced what they said and wrote. The believer who now devoutly studies their teachings, guided by the same Spirit that was in them, reproduces in himself their experience. And as in their experience they were sure they knew and expressed the mind of Christ, and

Present experience of the Christian not unlike that of the writers of the New Testament.

thus the mind and will of God, so we, in the reproduction of their experience in ourselves, have a like assurance that in the New Testament teaching we have the mind of Christ,—a revelation of the mind and will of God. Nor is this a fanciful assurance. The convictions, emotions, and aspirations of the Christian experience bear the unmistakable stamp of their origin. Divinely originated, they breed in us a desire for the Divine presence. The Spirit that begat them bears witness with our spirits of their origin. And they are both begotten and kept alive and vigorous only by means of Christian truth as recorded in the New Testament. Without reliance on the trustworthiness of that record, experience may begin in illusions, and, sooner or later, will end in fanaticism. In and through the experience of this power of Christian truth, we have an inward and convincing proof of the Divine origin of the Christian religion.

5. Christian experience proves the Divine origin not only of the teachings of Christianity, but also of the Christian religion as a whole. It not only teaches man what he should believe and do, but, when he accepts it as his religion, it assumes complete control of him, and promises amplest provision for all his spiritual necessities. Along whatever pathway and through whatever vicissitudes he may be led, his ultimate triumph is assured.

Christian
experience
cumulative.

Fulfilment of its promises breeds the conviction that the religion must be what it claims to be, — a religion given by revelation from God. And the more varied the experiences of fulfilment, the stronger the conviction. The evidence on which the conviction rests being cumulative, the conviction grows in strength throughout the longest life.

6. Objection to the validity of the argument as being individual, and of force with him only who has had the experience, is not well grounded. As well object to the reasoning of the mathematician on the ground that his premises, his processes, and consequently his conclusions, are unintelligible to him who is ignorant of mathematics; or to the reasoning of the philosopher, on the ground that only those acquainted with philosophy can appreciate it. Inability to appreciate an argument in no case invalidates it. If one would see and feel the force of mathematical and philosophical reasoning, he must know something of mathematics and philosophy. If one would estimate aright the argument from Christian experience, he must have the experience. And this experience every one who will may easily obtain. Unlike the long training requisite for mathematical or philosophical reasoning, it may begin on the instant, and enough of it be speedily

That experience is individual does not invalidate it as evidence.

acquired to enable one to feel and to wield the force of an argument from it. It is not the argument from experience which is at fault, but the objector who refuses to comply with the conditions for appreciating it.

Even if it be admitted that the evidence from experience is individual, and can be convincing to him only who knows what the experience really is, yet to him it is the most convincing of all. It, in fact, alone fully qualifies him for an appreciation of other evidences. He became a

Most convincing evidence to him who has the experience.

Christian, not because outward evidences persuaded him, but because consciousness of inward want impelled him. This inward want once satisfied, the meaning and worth of outward evidences are easily understood. They are invaluable as defences against outward assaults. Assailed by critics, he fortifies the outworks of his faith by evidences gathered from every available field of knowledge; but that which holds him in perfect peace and assurance of safety, is the felt power of his faith in the personal and living Christ. Nor, after all, is this evidence from experience exclusively individual and private. In one sense it becomes general and public. Individuals, multiplying and uniting in their testimonies through successive generations, make public proclamation to all human intelligence. Countless millions of these testi-

monies, rolling up through all the Christian centuries into the vast volume of Christian literature, constitute an array of evidence in behalf of the Divine origin of Christianity which unbelief cannot on any plea set aside.

PART III.

EVIDENCE FROM PAST AND PRESENT
ACHIEVEMENTS OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE Christian religion has now existed in the world nearly nineteen centuries. Throughout this period it has been giving evidence of its superhuman qualities and power, and thus of its Divine origin. It has done this by its re-creation of the character of those believing in it, and by its gradual uplifting and transformation of races and nations among whom it has gained a footing. Had its influence been corrupting and degrading, instead of elevating and refining, this would have been regarded as decisive evidence against any claims that could have been made for it as coming from God. The continuously refining and elevating influence shows it, on the contrary, to be in accord with the eternal laws of human progress.

The special aim of Christianity is to induce individuals to such an acceptance of its promises

Christian-ity seeks individual renovation. and compliance with its requirements as shall result in that personal renovation known in the Sacred Scriptures as "Salvation." Jesus Christ announced that He had come into the world to make this salvation attainable, but that it must be attained, if at all, by each individual for himself. Every one seeking this salvation is instinctively moved to seek, and to associate himself with, others of like disposition. In this way, under the directing power of the Holy Spirit, originated the Christian Church; and by the same instinctive movement of individuals, and under the same directing power, the Church has been perpetuated. Each individual sheds a light only on his own immediately surrounding darkness. Many similar lights shining together illumine an ever-widening area. The salt of a single Christian example, at first affecting only one's own limited environment, diffuses itself, with a constant extension of its preservative quality, through the masses of society. Thus Christianity, in addition to its specific work on the hearts and on the characters of a chosen few, also confers manifold benefits on society at large and on the national life.

CHAPTER I.

BENEFICENT INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

AMONG the distinguishing characteristics of Christian nations none are so marked or so easily traced to their origin as those due directly to Christian influence. It is not, however, forgotten that the beneficence of this influence is often denied. It is declared to have been mischievous, and sometimes even baneful. Some of these allegations have originated in a misunderstanding and misjudgment of the facts and teachings of Christianity, and some have been based on an abuse of Christianity by organizations supposed to represent it aright, and ordinarily known as Christian churches. The real Church of Christ—the actual “kingdom of God” among men—is a living organism, made vital in every part by the presence of the Spirit of the personal Christ. Ecclesiastical organizations, known to the public by their functionaries, and designated “churches,” have often so presented Christianity as to furnish apparent ground for serious charges against Christianity itself. The difference, however, between Christianity as Christ gave it, as the New Testament

Beneficent
influence
of Chris-
tianity
often
denied.

presents it, and as a select few in the churches illustrate it, — between such a Christianity, and the ecclesiastical organizations popularly supposed to represent it, cannot without confusion of thought be overlooked.

SECTION I. — ALLEGATIONS ORIGINATING IN MISJUDGMENT OF THE FACTS AND TEACHINGS OF CHRISTIANITY.

1. It has been charged that the influence of Christianity has been unfavorable to temperance; that the first miracle of Jesus — the turning of water into wine — was for the production of a dangerous luxury, and in needless profusion. The miracle, it is said, warrants a free use of wine, and the use of wine prepares the way for the use of spirituous liquors, and so for intemperance. Christianity is thus declared to be, though in a remote way, but to an appreciable degree, responsible for intemperance among the so called Christian nations. And it cannot be denied that the Turkish use of the terms “Frank” (Christian) and “drunkard” as synonymous, is not so wholly unwarranted as might at first appear. Buddhism and Mohammedanism, the only religions now competing with Christianity for supremacy in the world, both of them prohibit the use of all intoxicants as

drinks. The superiority claimed for these religions over Christianity in the matter of temperance is not, therefore, judging by the habits of the people professing the religions, so utterly chimerical as some have been disposed to think.

But the objection to the beneficent influence of Christianity on the ground of its permission of the use of wine, is urged mainly by a

few extremists among the advocates of total abstinence. Like other extremists among reformers, they are impatient of whatever may appear to obstruct their way, and denounce it as unqual-

Christianity deals with underlying forces which gradually reform.

ifiedly evil. Over zealous in pursuit of their object, they would accomplish in a day what God will bring to pass only through compliance with the laws of the slowly moving forces of society. They forget that Jesus in planting Christianity in the world recognized and participated in all such established usages of His day, social, civil, and religious, as were not in themselves positively evil, and did so that, by imbuing them with His Spirit, He might in time either bring them to an end, or so refine them as to transform them into agencies for good.

Marriage among the Jews was always a festive occasion, and was celebrated with wine. Jesus, coming to Cana accompanied by a few friends who had recently attached themselves to Him as disciples, accepted for

Miracle at Cana.

Himself and his friends an invitation to such a marriage festival. The unanticipated presence of Jesus and his disciples required more wine than the bridegroom had provided. The mother of Jesus privately suggested to Him that, as He and His friends were the occasion of the unexpected deficiency, it would be a fit thing for Him to procure an additional supply; but not a word in the narrative implies that she expected He would do it by a miracle. The emergency called for His interposition. He produced the wine, not to sanction its use for all time, either at marriages or on other festive occasions, but simply to meet the requirements of a Jewish custom. Time and place called for it. But he was establishing in the world a religion whose precepts and spirit should in time purge all usages of their elements of evil. And it is not to be forgotten that it is Christianity which furnishes the friends of total abstinence with the purest and most effective of their motives.

The methods of defending Christianity against the allegation of its non-beneficent influence in the matter of temperance, especially against the allegation that the miracle at Cana countenances the use of intoxicants, are not all of them in exact accord with the facts of the case. Thus, when it is maintained that the wines of Palestine were devoid of the alcoholic element, and that the wine pro-

False and
true de-
fence of
the miracle.

duced by Jesus was no more intoxicating than the simple juice of the grape, a position is assumed which accords neither with John's narrative of the event, nor with what was undoubtedly true of Palestinian wines. Nor again does it meet the case to affirm that the water did not actually become wine, but that, through hallucination or mesmeric influence, the ruler of the feast thought he was drinking wine while drinking only water. The supposition could accord neither with the honesty of Jesus nor with the truthfulness of the narrator. The only rational conclusion from the narrative is, that the ruler of the feast partook of real wine. But there is no evidence in the narrative that all the water in the six jars was transmuted into wine. The natural interpretation of the language of the account is, that only so much of the water became wine as was drawn out for use. The charge, therefore, that the miracle was wrought for the production of a luxury, and to an amount altogether in excess of the needs of the occasion, falls to the ground, as having no basis of fact. Only the lack occasioned by the unexpected presence of Jesus and His followers was provided for. To plead this provision as evidence that Christianity warrants a festive use of intoxicants is to misunderstand both the purpose of Jesus and the spirit of His religion.

2. It is alleged against Christianity, that by

the motives propounded to induce to an individual acceptance of its offer of personal salvation — viz. by appeals to fear of perdition for refusing its offer, and to hope of endless happiness for accepting it — it makes a direct appeal to self-regard, and selfishness is systematically cultivated.

Appeal to
low motives
charged on
Christian-
ity.

In considering this allegation it is first requisite that we free our minds of the vulgar and erroneous conception of the salvation offered. It is not a mere release by fiat of incurred penalty, and a bestowal of blessedness with a promise of its endless continuance. The salvation proposed by Jesus Christ is both a rescue from the dominion of moral evil, and the impartation, through Divine discipline, of a personal righteousness. The blessedness promised is an unclouded consciousness of harmony with God.

True idea
of "Salva-
tion."

To the charge that Christianity breeds selfishness, it is sufficient to reply that its very method of conferring the offered salvation not only deals a death-blow to selfishness, but plants in the soul the opposite principle of self-denial. The salvation offered in the Gospel is attainable only through loving trust in One whose whole earthly life was an unending act of self-sacrifice. The loving trust that initiates the rescuing process soon deepens into conscious fellowship; and fellowship is

Deals a
death-blow
to selfish-
ness.

partnership of spirit. To the believer, like the Christ in whom he trusts and with whom he communes, the highest satisfaction, the purest and most abiding joy, is in denying himself for the good of others.

That Christianity in its initial dealing with man does appeal to self-regard is evident from every page of the New Testament; but from the same pages it is equally evident that self-interest is appealed to only that it may be made to give place to something higher, and something capable of endless improvement in quality and in power to control and refine the soul. It is the glory of Christianity that it possesses in itself a range of motives reaching to the lowest depths into which man can fall, and to the highest stage to which he can ascend. The farther the Christian ascends in the scale of being, less and less is self regarded, until he finds his supreme satisfaction in identification of himself with the best interests of the universe, and with the perfect will of Him who has called all into being. Christianity takes man as it finds him, plying him with such motives as he can appreciate; but having once won his attention and his love, it never loses its hold on him until it brings him into harmony of purpose with God Himself.

Aim of Christianity to fill man with highest and noblest motives.

3. The Christian Scriptures, it is said, recog-

nize, and by recognizing perpetuate, class distinctions in society. They represent Class distinctions. Jesus as specifying the preaching of the Gospel to the poor to be one of the distinctive marks of the Messiahship. They also everywhere make care for the poor a Christian duty. Alms-giving is enjoined as of universal obligation. Warnings against a craving for riches and against a love of them when possessed, are manifold and of the gravest nature.

The tendency of these teachings, it is charged, has been to strengthen and perpetuate class distinctions, rather than to weaken and obliterate social inequalities. The poor have often felt encouraged to regard themselves as the favorites of heaven, as having before them the prospect of superior blessings in another state of being. By becoming habitual recipients of alms, they have been demoralized and degraded into permanent pauperism. Poverty has been regarded as a guaranty of Divine favor, and among certain religious orders poverty and mendicancy have been exalted to the dignity of virtues. Into the minds of alms-givers has also often crept the feeling of complacency as doers of meritorious acts. And the very rich, conscious of being objects of unfavorable regard with their fellow men and stigmatized of God, have often become morose, selfish, and defiant alike of God and man.

But it is not to be forgotten that injunctions in respect to the poor and the duty of almsgiving, and warnings against riches, had their origin mainly in the condition of the Jews and the state of society when the injunctions and warnings were first uttered. The Jews were a conquered and oppressed people, and their poor were hopelessly and helplessly poor. The rich had mostly gotten their riches by extortion, rapine, and excessive usury. Christianity could not do otherwise than recognize the existing condition of society when it began its work, and point out the mutual obligations resting on its several classes. But there have been peoples who much more needed to have the Christian duties of industry, self-restraint, and practical morality, than that of almsgiving, urged on their attention. The excessive alms-giving and pauperism among certain peoples of Southern Europe have been due to no teaching of New Testament Christianity, but to the traditional notions of the merit of alms-giving and to the example of the mendicant friars. The most effective cure of it all would be the open New Testament in the vernacular, and in the hands of the common people. It nowhere encourages indiscriminate charity, and nowhere warrants the practice of begging. The teachings of the New Testament are one-sided on no subject, but accord with the requirements of all

Injunctions
explained
by state of
Jewish so-
ciety.

national laws and of the common sense of mankind. Its teachings are comprehensive of the needs of all peoples and of all states of society. And no state of society has yet come, or is likely to come, in which the vicissitudes and unavoidable disasters of life will not demand practical charity to the suffering, and will not bring rich blessings to the charitable.

4. Christianity, it is charged, though distinctively moral in its requirements, is, inconsistently with itself, unfavorable in its theological doctrines to the cultivation of morality. Vicarious salvation, it is said, is one of the most fundamental of its doctrines; and to trust in what another does and suffers for us rather than in what we do for ourselves, it is declared, is to rob morality of a chief incentive to the cultivation of it. To this it is sufficient to reply that the vicariousness of what Christ did and suffered is undoubtedly a Christian doctrine. The Sacred Scriptures also very plainly teach that man is incapable of saving himself by his own works, but must do it, if at all, through faith in One who has interposed in his behalf, and who, by His resurrection from the dead, has proved His interposition to be efficacious to all who will trust in Him. But this vicariousness may be, and often has been, strangely misunderstood and misapplied. It is misunderstood when the metaphorical language in which the

Charge that
the doctrine
of vicarious
salvation is
immoral in
its effects.

Holy Scriptures describe it, is taken in a strictly literal sense.

The metaphors are borrowed from courts of justice. But when to these metaphors is given a literal and scientific meaning, and on this is built up an exact juridical atonement, leaving "nothing great or small for us to do," a subtle Antinomianism may easily creep in, and a robust morality may fail to be acquired. The fault, however, is not in the doctrine of the vicariousness of the life and death of Christ, but in an inexcusable perversion of it. Perversion of the doctrine. Few truths are more self-evident than the doctrine that every man becomes like the person he most profoundly loves and believes in. Jesus Christ lived, suffered, and died for us — in our stead — vicariously, that we, coming into a loving and trustful fellowship with Him, should become like Him. The vicariousness of Christ's work and death avails for no man who does not through his faith avail himself of it. Rightly understood and believed in, instead of robbing morality of one incentive, it gives to it many of the strongest and most effective conceivable, — incentives that gather strength with every new experience in life.

5. Christianity has been objected to as cultivating the softer and more feminine virtues to the comparative neglect of the harder and more masculine; that Cultivates too exclusively softer virtues.

it is, accordingly, in its moral discipline a religion for women rather than for men. And it may be admitted to surpass Judaism and other ancient religions, as well as Stoicism and other philosophies, in its production of the gentler virtues. It does this by its method of dealing with man. It begins its work with him by planting itself in his heart and assuming control of his affections. Other religions work from without the man, inward; Christianity from within, outward. Christ, the Source and Centre of the religion, was Himself the embodiment, and practical illustration of the highest spiritual refinement. One of the distinctive marks of the Christian type of character is gentleness and refinement of spirit.

But Christianity is neither neglectful nor unproductive of the sturdy and heroic virtues. In fact, the sturdiest virtues and the highest heroism are always found to spring from a heart of gentleness and purity. Physical courage, the source of the vulgar type of the heroic, requires neither mental reflection nor the finer qualities of heart to give it birth, and it is every way inferior to moral courage, as this is to Christian courage. The impetuous Peter could at midnight draw his sword and slash away at Malchus, cutting off his right ear at a stroke, and before morning, cowering in the presence of a servant-maid who accused him of

having been a disciple of Jesus, could deny that he ever knew Him. But when Peter had recovered from the mortification into which his moral cowardice had betrayed him, and when his Christian courage had become mature, he could without the quiver of a nerve face any danger, even the most torturing of deaths, for the love he bore to the Master and to the cause he had by his moral cowardice so much dishonored. Among all the heroes of the world's history none have yet equalled the heroes of the Christian Church, who in the name of Christ have fought the fiercest foes and have achieved for mankind its richest and most enduring blessings.

SECTION II.—OBJECTIONS ARISING FROM AN IDENTIFICATION OF CHRISTIANITY WITH THE CHURCH.

Christianity presents itself in the world under four aspects: first, as a spirit and life derived from Jesus Christ; secondly, as a collection of sacred writings and creeds by which the lives of its adherents are to be regulated; thirdly, as a cultus or worship paid to God as Supreme; and, fourthly, as associations of men and women organized into churches for the cultivation of the Christian life according to the Sacred Scriptures, and for offering public worship and other religious services to God. It is rational, therefore, that critical estimates of the value of Christianity should turn either on judgments formed

respecting its teachings, or on judgments formed respecting its churches. Having glanced in the preceding section at the estimates founded on erroneous judgments of its teaching, let us consider briefly the allegation against it arising from identifying it with the Church.¹

1. The Church, it is said, has often been in league with oppressors ministering to the rich and powerful rather than to the poor and down-trodden. The charge may be true of certain churches and at certain periods, but lies neither against Christianity, which is supposed to be represented by the churches, nor against the Church in itself considered, but against dominating members of the churches, or against selfish and faithless officials who have perverted the Church to their own private and personal ends. Christianity, as we have seen, has been criticised adversely for the emphasis it lays on care for the poor. It is not its fault if its professed adherents have been untrue to its teachings and spirit.

¹ The word "Church" is here used in its collective or generic sense, not as denoting the spiritual, invisible aggregate of true believers, but as comprehending all those organizations, under whatever name known, which have been commonly understood to be representative of Christianity at different periods and among different peoples. The allegations specified may have been true sometimes of one, and sometimes of another, of these organizations.

2. The Church, it is said, has often engaged in bloody persecutions for opinion's sake, claiming in doing so to be acting on authority from God, and to be fulfilling one of its own legitimate functions. It has burned heretics and has waged desolating wars in support of professedly religious ends. And it is against no single branch of the Church that the allegations can justly be made. Churches in alliance with States, and empowered to inflict the death penalty, may have seemed to be most cruel persecutors, but not less relentless have been the churches that could inflict only ecclesiastical penalties, or cast unjust aspersions still harder to bear. All have gone upon the supposition that if they could stifle convictions by penal inflictions, they could preserve from error and establish in the truth. No species of persecution, however, can justify itself by any precept or principle of Christianity. In fact, any resort to force is wholly alien to its spirit, and a violation of its plainest precepts. The origin of persecution is in a total misconception of the office and of the responsibility of the Church, as well as of the method by which men are induced either to accept or to reject any belief. No form of persecution ever yet won to a love of truth, though it has persuaded multitudes into a hypocritical pretence of loving it. Christianity

Charge that
the Church
has persecuted for
opinion's
sake.

is, throughout its teachings, too thoroughly accordant with the laws of human psychology to commit the blunder of persecuting for non-acceptance of its declarations or of its offers. It was neither Christianity nor the Church, in itself considered, that burnt Ridley and Latimer in England, or Servetus in Switzerland, or witches in Massachusetts, but the bigotry and ignorance of Church functionaries.

3. The Church, it is also alleged, has often refused liberty of thought in other directions than in theological thinking. It has resisted with fiery opposition the progress of both Science and Philosophy, and the truth of the charge cannot be denied. The most discreditable chapters in Church History are those which detail the hostility in past centuries of ecclesiastics to every advancing step in scientific and historical inquiry; but the hostility was born neither of the spirit of the Gospel nor of New Testament teaching, but of the dense ignorance and fanaticism of ecclesiastics. Christianity of itself breeds thoughtfulness and stimulates inquiry. Neither it nor the Church proper was responsible for the ill treatment of Roger Bacon or of Galileo, or for the burning of Giordano Bruno, or for the apprehension of danger alike from Roman Catholics and Protestants, felt by Descartes, any more than Greek Philosophy or the

That it has resisted the progress of Science and Philosophy.

Athenian State was responsible for the fate of Socrates.

4. The Church, it is affirmed, has often connived at great social and political wrongs. It has winked at, and even defended, domestic slavery. It is sometimes claimed that the holding of men and women in chattel bondage has the defence of Apostolic authority. The Apostle Paul, it is said, recognized and virtually approved of slavery by returning the runaway slave Onesimus to his master Philemon, and by prescribing rules of conduct for both slaves and their masters. The Apostle Peter is equally explicit in enjoining faithful service on slaves. Both Peter and Paul commanded obedience to the existing government, even though it should chance to be, as was the case then, a government administered by one of the bloodiest of tyrants, — one under which they both suffered martyrdom.¹

Charge that
the Church
has defend-
ed social
wrongs.

But there are two considerations which they, who have pressed these charges against the Church and against the teaching of the Apostles, have been quite too ready to overlook. The first is, that the Church, unconsciously influenced

¹ Prof. W. M. Ramsay, in his "The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170," Ch. XIII., maintains that the First Epistle of Peter was not written under the reign of Nero, but under the reign of Vespasian, and somewhere between A.D. 75 and 80. And the reasons adduced for this belief are not without weight.

by motives of interest, have put upon the language of the Apostles a meaning which they do not warrant. Instead of sanctioning slavery, they simply prescribed rules to be observed by the Christian master and the Christian servant, well knowing that in due time Christianity, in the fulness of its teaching, would cut up the whole system of slavery by its roots. Christianity, as taught alike by Christ and His Apostles, did not seek to correct the wrongs of society and the injustices of governments, by inciting to sudden and violent revolutions, but it aimed, by the inculcation of just ideas and the infusion of a right spirit, to effect a radically progressive improvement of human society, and thus, a reconstruction of human governments. The high aim has always been so to inspire a people with a love of justice and righteousness as to effect a permanent cure of all wrongs, both social and political. Let us glance at some of the benefits which, in pursuit of its purpose, it has already bestowed on our race.

SECTION III. — POSITIVE BENEFITS OF CHRISTIANITY.

There are three ways in which these benefits have become apparent in the world's history;

Comparison of Christian and non- Christian nations.	two of them general, and one special. In a broad and general way, these may be seen in a comparison of Christian and non-Christian nations; or, in a
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comparison of a Christian nation as it is to-day with itself as it was prior to its Christianization; or, in a more specific way, by noticing certain single and distinctive results produced by Christianity among peoples that have accepted it as their religion.

Thus, first, if we compare in a general way any one of the so-called Christian nations with any other nation under the sway of a religion not Christian, the difference in the influence of the two religions is too marked not to be immediately recognized. The influence of Christianity in refining the moral tastes and exalting the moral character of a Christian nation is too evident to require any justification of its claim to be regarded as beneficent.

Or, secondly, if we compare any one of the so-called Christian nations of to-day with itself as it was when Christianity first came to it, we may at once discern evidences of a progress which nothing inherent in itself can explain, and only the forces of the Christian religion can adequately account for. Thus we may take England and trace her course as she emerged from the savagery and barbarism in which the Romans found her, down to the present day, when she stands in the van of the nations of the world. Many bloods have commingled in forming the amalgam of her character. Many forces have

Comparison
of nations
before and
after be-
coming
Christian-
ized.

contributed to mould it, some of them coming from remote plains of India, some from the wilds of Saxony, some from the rocky shores of Denmark, some from Greece, and some from Rome. But over all has dominated the Christian religion, controlling the conscience and permeating the heart of the nation; and thus fusing all forces at work in it into a clearly definable unity. Christianity above all else has made the England of History and the England of to-day. But, thirdly, the actual benefits conferred by Christianity may perhaps be more clearly discerned by specifying some of the distinctively Christian results produced by it among nations that have accepted it as their religion. Thus, —

1. The Christian religion both by its precepts and its spirit has uniformly tended directly to the eradication, root and branch, of every species of human bondage, whether in the form of domestic slavery,¹ of social caste, or of political tyranny. Its two doctrines of individual responsibility and

Spirit of
Christian-
ity adverse
to human
bondage.

¹ J. H. Muirhead, in his "Elements of Ethics," § 97, says, "Slave emancipation, in more recent times, was the result of the discovery that the system of industry founded upon slavery was an unprofitable one, and unable to compete with free labor." This statement requires a much larger qualification than he seems disposed to allow it. Unprofitableness was not the cause of the abolition of slavery either in the British colonies or in the United States.

of the common brotherhood of mankind struck directly at self-aggrandizement, and begat in its stead sympathy with the weakest and lowliest. Though Jesus gave no injunctions about slavery, His loving pity for all who were in distress disclosed the power of religion to melt the bands of oppression. His requirement that every one shall love his neighbor as himself both reminds us of His example and prompts us to follow it. Slowly but surely His religion, from the beginning of its work in the world until now, has been making the wrongs of men increasingly clear, and as the time has been ripe for it, has been bringing some of them to an end. And it has done this, not by superficial remedies, but by radical cures. Throughout the centuries it has been making it more and more clear that the only just ground for distinctions among men has been in their personal characters. The evidence of a beneficent influence has been all the more apparent from the groundlessness of the charge already considered, that Religion has connived at oppression, and has sympathized with oppressors rather than with the oppressed.

2. Christianity has done for woman what no other religion has done, or has conceived it as possible to do. And what it has done for her has proclaimed to all the world its beneficent influence. Enlightened women, bred and living under other religions, rec-

Christian-
ity has
elevated
woman.

ognize this influence, and see in it a ground of hope for the relief of their sex. A comparison of the condition of women as it was at any one of the great centres of civilization, such as Athens, Rome, or Jerusalem, when Christ came into the world, with her condition at any one of the centres of Christian civilization in our day, will show what a change has been wrought for her. From being the slave of man, the prey of his lusts, a toy for him to play with awhile and to fling aside when tired of her, she has been placed by his side by Christianity, his companion and his equal. Nor can it justly be said that the worship of Mary has done this. Nor, again, has it been mainly by the example of Jesus in His care for the welfare of women during His stay on earth that His religion has wrought most effectively for her. Nothing less than the whole scope of His teaching and the broad spirit of charity which it inculcates, working through many centuries,* will account for what has been accomplished for woman, — a religion which teaches us that in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female, but all are one in Him.

3. Christianity gave to the world a practical and an effectual philanthropy. Jesus Himself introduced it when in founding the kingdom of God on earth He performed His gracious works of healing. His disciples followed His example in caring for the

Has given
a true phi-
lanthropy.

sick, the helpless, and the destitute. The Christian world has since become studded all over with Hospitals, Asylums, and Homes for the forsaken and forlorn. Other religions have, it must be admitted, also recognized the duty of philanthropy. Buddha, more than five centuries before Christ, enjoined care for the sick and suffering, and his disciples provided Hospitals and Asylums. But a religion which recognized no God of mercy and pity for man, and made it man's highest duty to aim at the extinction of every desire of his soul, was not a religion which could breed a living and abiding philanthropy. The Stoics also a century and a half before Christ had uttered beautiful sentiments about the unity of the race and the common nature of all men, and the consequent duties of humanity and philanthropy. In the first and second centuries after Christ, the two most distinguished of Stoical writers, Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, were unqualified in their praise of what is now called "Altruism," — regard for the welfare of mankind. Epictetus, to quote the language of Zeller, advocated "the most comprehensive and unlimited philanthropy," and Marcus Aurelius urged the duty of a philanthropy "the most limitless and unselfish," and even urged it while putting to death, on account of their religion, such Christians as Justin Martyr and his associates. But a religion

or a philosophy, or whatever else Stoicism may be called, which could both advocate and practise self-murder when life should promise no pleasure in the continuance of it, was not a religion or philosophy which would either originate or perpetuate a practical or an effectual philanthropy. Christianity alone could do it. In our day, however, attempts are made to give to philanthropy a scientific form and a scientific basis. Under the name of Socialism it proposes by scientific and statutory methods to reconstruct human society. But divested of the inner life and nature which Christianity, its real parent, originally gave it, the issues of its endeavors no prophet is needed to foretell. Only by its re-Christianization can it ever control human wills and become world-wide in its aim and its power. Signs of a fast-spreading enthusiasm for humanity are all hopeful, but only when this enthusiasm shall be touched with a consciousness of co-operation with the infinite love of the Infinite Father will it become an effective and a world encircling philanthropy.

4. Throughout the Christian centuries there has been a slow but steadily growing improvement in jurisprudence and penology. Organized jurisprudence in the modern world had its origin in ancient Roman law, modified however by canon law, which itself also showed traces of the shaping influ-

Improve-
ment in
jurispru-
dence.

ence of the theocratic laws of Judaism. The aim alike of Roman law and Jewish law had been the maintenance of justice, but of justice as enforced by the law of retaliation.

The Church was too closely allied to the State, and too deeply imbued with its secular spirit, to be alive to its opportunity to work mercifully for man in its canon law. The old idea of the function of law as the administration of justice through vengeance still kept its place, and kept it with the sanction of the Church. Only slowly in the history of the Church has the Christian method of dealing with crime been understood; only at a comparatively late period in its history has the spirit of Jesus towards criminals got itself recognized by those who have enacted criminal statutes.

In two ways has the result of this recognition been manifested in jurisprudence: first, in adjusting penalty as nearly as possible to degree of guilt as ascertained by scrutiny of the disposition and motive of the criminal, instead of punishing all crimes of the same name with the same penalty; and, secondly, in seeking by penalty not alone to inflict vengeance on the criminal, but, if possible, to effect his reform. It is Christianity that has transformed the pestilent prison and dungeon into the well-lighted and cheerful reformatory.

Adjust-
ment of
penalty.

On a broader scale, and in a more conspicuous way, the benign influence of Christianity has been shown in its modification of the mode of dealing with national offences. Never, perhaps, in the history of the world was there an illustration of this influence on penology more striking, or attended with a notoriety more world-wide, than was furnished in what occurred at the close of our late civil war. When the great Rebellion had been suppressed, the national government was confronted with one of the most difficult problems that can come before the rulers of a nation, — What should it do with the arch-conspirators with whom responsibility for the rebellion rested? They were either already in the hands of the government or were within easy reach. The national Constitution had stated with exactness the nature of their offence, and had prescribed its penalty. Should the penalty be inflicted? Two opposite answers were given, and vigorously maintained. The one was, that a great organic law had been violated, and, unless the offence were avenged, it would be repeated, and endless disaster would ensue; the other was, that amnesty, or at least a simple remission of penalty, would be safe, and much more in accordance with the principles and the spirit of the Christian religion. The latter view prevailed, and a great Christian nation approved

Mode of
dealing
with na-
tional of-
fences.

it. It is more than doubtful if it could have prevailed in any earlier century, or would have been sanctioned by any other than a free, self-governing, Christian people.

5. Christianity, if it did not absolutely originate International Law, has at least supplied it as it now exists, with its most determinative principles. Just when it originated is not certain. We only know that the nations prior to the Christian Era knew nothing of it. There are no traces of it among the older races of India, and none among the Greeks. Among the early Romans are found dim fore-shadowings of it, as, for instance, in their requirement of the sanctions of religion before deciding on the proclamation of war, and still more in their so-called Law of Nations (*Jus Gentium*), a code for the government of vanquished peoples in the provinces. It was derived in part from Roman law, in part from the laws and usages of the peoples to be governed, and in part from the dictates of nature. From the Roman *Law of Nations* International Law has doubtless borrowed, but it bears in every part of it unmistakable traces of a Christian influence. In fact, Christianity may be said virtually to have created it, though in the process of creation, it has wrought into the framework of it certain self-evident laws of nature, and certain other laws, which, though in them-

selves not less laws of nature, had been handed down from Rome.

During the earlier part of the latter half of the centuries of our era, there were occasional recognitions of the applicability of Christian precepts to the intercourse of nations, as well as to the intercourse of individuals; but it was not until well into the seventeenth century that Hugo Grotius, the scholar, theologian, and publicist of Holland, wrote his great treatise on the Right of War and Peace (*De Jure Belli et Pacis*), and first systemized the principles of International Law. He built avowedly on the twofold basis of Nature and the Christian Revelation, assuming that the God of Nature is also the God of Revelation, and that what He has wrought in the former He has both corroborated and made clearer in the latter. Some of the supposed laws of nature incorporated by the Romans into their *Law of Nations*, he repudiated as contrary to the laws of nature, and justified his repudiation by an appeal to Christianity; one of these supposed natural laws was the right of a conquering nation to make slaves of the conquered. Throughout his famous treatise, his ultimate test of the truth of his principles was the spirit and precepts of Christianity. The writers who since his day have treated of International Law, even when professedly basing their principles on natural

Hugo Grotius on the "Right of War and Peace."

laws, show very plainly that their interpretation of these laws has been affected by the light that Christian Revelation has shed on them. The steadily growing recognition of arbitration in some form — by referees or by national commissions — as a just method of settling national disputes, and, more than all, the successful resorts to such arbitration in recent years, particularly by Great Britain and the United States, strongly mark the advancing, as well as the benign, influence of the Christian religion. All this warrants the belief that the time is yet to come when all the great nations will unite in the creation of permanent international courts, before which all national differences shall be peacefully and definitively settled. The far-off day foreseen by prophets, when nations shall “beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, and none shall learn war any more,” may not, after all, be so very remote as has commonly been feared. Meanwhile, till peace shall come to earth to remain forever, let us notice: —

6. How an advancing Christianity has been progressively ameliorating the horrors of war. Comparison of the usages of war common when authentic history began, with those now prevailing, shows at once how vast have been the gains for humanity during the intervening centuries. But the ame-

Ameliorations of the atrocities of war.

literations occurring between the time of Joshua, or that of Samuel four centuries later, and the tenth or twelfth century of our era, are scarcely more striking than those which since then have taken place. Under Moses, the command to Joshua was to exterminate the Canaanitish people utterly; under Samuel, King Saul was commanded to "smite Amalek and utterly destroy; spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling." Saul spared Agag, King of the Amalekites, and Samuel deposed him for his disobedience, and, sending for Agag, "hewed him in pieces." These barbarities may not have been equalled in the Middle Ages, but the cruelties then practised are only slightly less shocking to the sensibilities of the Christian of to-day. It was far along in the Christian centuries before even Christian nations ceased to seize and either slay or enslave embassies sent during war to sue for peace. Enslavement or mutilations worse than death were the not unusual fate of captives taken in war. It has been only within the present century that Christianity has begun to exercise its divine office in assuaging the agonies of war. Though its influence has not yet become strong enough to restrain nations from waging wars, it has sufficed to make combatants as considerate of each other as the exigencies of war will permit. Its ministrations before the walls of

Sevastopol, and on the fields of America during our great civil war, have declared its power to alleviate the woes of war in a way which the human race will never cease to remember. And it will be more and more distinctly recognized as one of the thousand ways in which God is teaching man to be merciful to his fellow man, in accordance with His holy religion given to us through Jesus Christ His Son.

CHAPTER II.

CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH CHRISTIANITY
ACHIEVED ITS FIRST VICTORIES.

LIKE the beginning of every other great epoch in the world's history, the beginning of Christianity was made possible only by conditions then existing. The conditions had been long time forming, and, when completed, bore marks of formal adjustment to one another, and of an adjustment of all to a common end. They were marks such as no merely fortuitous concurrence of circumstances could account for. Nothing less than a foreseeing and predisposing Intelligence, supreme in its control of nations, could explain them.

Three distinct lines of preparation, running through many centuries, but ending in the needed conditions, were simultaneously carried forward by three independent nations, — the Jewish, the Greek, the Roman. When Christ came, the fulness of time had arrived; the world had been made ready for Him. But when He had come, the very preparations made for His coming became, through the perversity of man, the most formidable of obstacles to the pro-

gress of His religion. The Divine Hand that so plainly had directed in preparing for it, was not less conspicuously displayed in making it victorious over every obstacle. The Divine origin of Christianity is not less plainly seen in the power that made its triumph certain, than in the wisdom and power that made its beginning possible.

SECTION I.—THE PREPARATION WROUGHT BY THE JEWS.

Theirs was a twofold task: first, to develop crude germs of ethical and religious thought into the ideas to be utilized by Jesus; secondly, so to accustom the Jews to the thought of a Messiah, and so to keep alive in them the expectation of His coming, that when He should appear they would be willing to listen to Him. Thus, first, a system of moral and religious ideas was to be made ready. This required a long process. To make such ideas clear and comprehensible to a people like the Jews under Moses, there was necessary a succession of steps from a lower to a higher level. They must be dealt with as we deal with children: words must first be used in a sense level with their experience and understanding; as their intelligence grows, the words first used take on a deeper meaning,

Preparation by the Jews in developing ideas to be utilized by Jesus.

and as intelligence still advances, terms become metaphorical, and the meaning deepens and widens and becomes clearer. So with the Jews. It was but vague meanings they could at first attach to the terms Faith, Law, Righteousness, Justice, Holiness; and but dim conceptions they could form of the office of their ritual, or of the future foretold by their prophets. Nothing less than the meanings which had been reached in the use of these when Jesus came, could have sufficed for the use He was to make of them. It is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive how He could have begun His teaching when He did, or have introduced the Kingdom of God as He did, except through use of what Judaism had made ready to His hand.

The second function of the Jews was to awaken and keep alive the expectation of the Messiah. To do this was the special work of the prophets, and most effectually did they accomplish it. For hundreds of years they rang changes on His coming and His offices, each generation adding to the emphasis of the preceding. The expectation had never been so strong as when Jesus appeared. Without this expectation it is next to impossible to conceive how His Messiahship, with all His want of outward insignia, could have been successfully pleaded.

By keeping
alive the
expecta-
tion of the
Messiah.

And it is also equally difficult, if not impossible, to conceive how Christianity without the Jews could have gained its first footing among the Gentiles. The Jews were scattered far and wide among the Gentile cities; and wherever twelve of them, resident heads of families, were found, there, according to uniform custom, a synagogue was opened. Connected with the synagogues were often those known as "religious proselytes" (Acts xiii. 42), attracted from the more morally earnest heathen. To these synagogues the Apostle Paul and his associates in their missionary tours always immediately resorted when they entered a Gentile city, and there began to preach the Gospel of Christ. Converts from among both Jews and proselytes thus made in the synagogues, formed the nuclei of Churches, and through these the Gospel was brought into contact with heathen minds. Without the Synagogue, the missionary labors of the Apostles would have been at a most crippling, if not fatal, disadvantage.

But no sooner had Jesus begun His work as Messiah, than Judaism arrayed itself against Him. Its opposition was fierce and implacable. Every available expedient was adopted to discredit His teaching and to crush Him. Not content with murdering Him, the Jews exhausted every re-

By giving
access to
the Gen-
tiles.

Jewish
opposition
to Chris-
tianity.

source in vain attempts to exterminate His followers and annihilate His religion. Judaism thus made itself to be the dark background on which the Almighty, who had planted and always protected it, could trace in letters of light, to be read of all men, that the Christian religion was a religion which His own Right Hand had planted, and which could not be uprooted. The whole history of the Jews from Abraham to John the Baptist had been one continuous and luminous illustration of the Divine Presence and Power, raising them for an end higher than themselves; when they would thwart that end, the same Divine Power was still more conspicuously manifested in bringing the end, in spite of them, to its full accomplishment.

SECTION II. — THE PREPARATION FURNISHED BY THE GREEKS.

They furnished it in two ways, — by their Philosophy and by their Language. They were pre-eminently the thinkers and the investigators among the nations. They carried philosophical inquiry to the utmost limit then attained or attainable by the human intellect. They also cultivated their language with an assiduity and to a degree equalled by no other people. They gave to it a degree of excellence surpassed by no other

Greeks
prepared
the way for
Christian-
ity.

tongue ever yet spoken among men,—a language suited alike to the uses of Poetry, Philosophy, and History.

By their philosophy was accomplished a two-fold purpose. First, by it was shown the inability of the unaided intellect to know, ^{By their} i. e. to find out, God. Religious in- ^{Philosophy.} quiry, and one might almost say the same of ethical, was carried to the utmost limit, but only to prove the fruitlessness of the search. Secondly, Greek Philosophy, by its careful and discriminative use of concepts, its scrutiny of mental processes, and its multiplication of terms for the expression of different shades of thought, supplied Christianity with a needed terminology. Without this terminology, Christian ideas could have had no adequate expression. The changes wrought in the soul of man could have been neither fully nor intelligibly described. The Hebrew or Aramaic vocabulary was too meagre, and would have been unintelligible outside of Palestine. The Latin tongue was too inflexible, and too scantily supplied with terms descriptive of mental action and emotion. Neither the Hebrews nor the Romans had attained to any clearly definable psychology, or had given any attention to philosophy, and consequently could offer almost no terms such as Christianity had special need of.

But it was a still wider service than this that

the Greek language rendered to Christianity.

By their Language. In fact, it was only as a part of this broader service that, through the manipulations of Philosophy, it was enabled to provide Christianity with its needed terminology. When the Christian Era began, Greek was both a written and a spoken tongue alike at Jerusalem, at Damascus, at Rome, throughout the cities of Asia Minor, and at Alexandria in Egypt. Roman arms had conquered Greece, but Greece in return had, with her language, philosophy, and art, mastered Rome. So thoroughly had the Jews, scattered in the foreign cities, become accustomed to the use of Greek, that in Palestine they were known as Hellenists or Grecized Jews. For more than a century and a half before Christ, the Hebrew Scriptures had been translated into Greek. This translation, known as the Septuagint, had accomplished the double result of familiarizing the Jews with the use of Greek in their religion, and of making known to the heathen, especially the proselytes, the moral law and the ritual of Judaism. No language then in use was accordingly so well fitted to be the one in which the New Testament Scriptures should be written. Usage had prepared no other for so clear an expression of Christian ideas, and no other was so universally used at the great centres of population. Indeed, no other language then existed which could have

served the ends, and met the various needs, of Christianity. Absolutely indispensable as Greek was in the introduction of Christianity, not less necessary was it in the propagation of it. All Christian literature for the first two centuries, at least all now extant, was in Greek, and, so far as we know, the preaching of the Gospel during these centuries was in the same tongue. And when one traces the process through which the Greek tongue was prepared for its Christian offices, it must be an obtuse or a perverse intellect that fails to discover in it evidences of the foreseeing and controlling agency of a Supreme Intelligence.

But no sooner had the Christian religion begun to make itself known among the nations as distinctive and separate from all others, ^{Greek op-} than the Greeks, who had done so ^{position to} much to make the introduction and ^{Christian-} ^{ity.} propagation of it possible, treated it with scorn. The heralds of it were "babblers," and their preaching was "foolishness." Salvation through One who had been condemned and publicly executed was to them the height of absurdity. The resurrection was "the hope of worms." A blessed immortality was the dream of poets. Seeing the futility of its derision, Greek Philosophy tried its flattery. Proposing to assist Christian teachers to an understanding and a rationalized statement of some of the profound-

est and most mysterious of the truths of their religion, it decoyed them into the construction of systems of Gnosticism. In attempting to philosophize these truths into doctrines that should be regarded as matters of real knowledge, instead of belief, they elaborated the most dangerous and actually damaging heresy that the early Church was called to encounter. In spite of the efforts of Greek Philosophy to thwart the ends it had just subserved, the Divine Hand made the ends certain to be fulfilled, and, in fulfilling them, gave evidence to every one who will see, that Christianity is a religion of Divine, and not alone of human origin. The same Divine prevision and power that had so plainly prepared the Greek tongue and philosophy to subserve Christian ends, were displayed with equal plainness in bringing the ends to pass, in spite of every obstruction that human perversity could devise.

SECTION III. — PREPARATION BY THE ROMANS AND THE ROMAN EMPIRE.

This, in the order of time, was subsequent to that of both the preceding. It also affected the beginning and progress of Christianity in ways very different from those of either of the others. The preparatory service of the first was distinctively religious; that of the second was philosophical

Preparation
by the Ro-
mans, politi-
cal and in-
stitutional.

and literary; that of the third was political and institutional. The Romans prepared for the coming of Christ, and for the diffusion of His religion, in three ways: —

1. By subjecting and direfully oppressing the Jews. The desperate and fruitless struggles of the latter for liberty ended only in their being more remorselessly trodden into the dust. On the verge of despair, they bethought themselves of the Divine deliverance which had been vouchsafed to their forefathers, and of the promises that had been made to these of protection for their descendants. With eager eyes they scanned the words of the old prophets in search of some ground of hope for relief. The more they studied the prophets, the stronger became their conviction that their only hope was in the promised Messiah. Apocalyptic literature centring in the Messianic idea rapidly multiplied, so that when Jesus came, the universal atmosphere of religious thought was in motion with Messianic expectations. False conceptions of the expected Messiah springing from too literal an interpretation of prophetic imagery doubtless prevailed, but popular expectations were none the less inflamed by them. Without these vivid expectations it is more than doubtful if Jesus, so unlike the idea that had been formed of the Messiah, could have gained for Himself

Roman oppression of the Jews stimulated hope of a Deliverer.

a hearing. In all this the Divine Hand used the Romans to make the Jews ready for their appointed, but their misunderstood Deliverer.

2. As masters of the then known world, the Romans had brought all nations and tribes within their reach under one supreme government. Over them all, the authority of Roman law, with such slight modifications as a recognition of local customs and institutions made politic, was unyieldingly enforced. Under this authority Roman citizenship, whether a birthright or purchased, everywhere gave to its possessor assurance of protection and safety. Of this protection the first preachers of the Gospel among the Gentiles, like the Apostle Paul and his associates, were not slow to avail themselves. Without it there is good reason for believing their course would have ended at its beginning.

3. In the vast extent of the Roman Empire it was indispensable that communication between its distant provinces and the central seat of authority and power should be as immediate as possible. Broad and solid roads were accordingly built for the march of armies and the transfer of military equipments. Roman control of the Mediterranean and adjacent seas also gave protection to maritime commerce. Without the great roads, and without the safety on both the roads and

Roman gov-
ernment
gave pro-
tection.

Gave facil-
ity of com-
munication.

the seas, which only the authority of the Empire could give, the heralds of the cross could have made little or no progress. The Almighty Power that had made the Egyptian and the Assyrian subservient in their day to the Divine Will in all their relations with the Israelites, made also the Roman in his day subservient to the same Will in opening the way for the coming and the spread of the religion for which alone the Israelites in all their career had been shielded and disciplined.

But when the Messiah came, for whose coming and whose religion the Romans had unwittingly done so much to prepare the way, the supreme power of the Empire was at once exerted to destroy both Him and His religion.

1. This supreme authority lent itself to Jewish malignity in crucifying the Messiah, though the sole representative of that authority in Palestine frankly admitted that he could discern no just cause for His execution. The supreme authority of the empire was thus vainly exerted to strangle Christianity at its birth.

Permitted
the cruci-
fixion.

2. The Romans also killed the two chief Apostles, Peter and Paul, and afterwards, slaughtering like sheep hundreds of thousands of other disciples of Jesus, did their utmost to stamp out of existence every vestige of the new and hated religion.

Killed the
two chief
Apostles.

3. The Emperors prohibited, under penalties

of torturing deaths, every form of profession of Christianity. The fanatical zeal of the people against Christians could be satisfied with no measures less stringent.

Prohibited
Chris-
tianity.

The kind-hearted and liberal-minded Trajan found it extremely difficult in the face of this zeal to arrest persecutions and to exercise clemency in the treatment of Christians. Hadrian was compelled to yield to it. Even the large-minded and large-hearted Marcus Aurelius, whose "Meditations" abound in sentiments of humanity and charity, could put to death without hesitation men of the most blameless lives, like Justin Martyr, whose only offence was loyalty to Christ and His religion. Surely if anything could have exterminated Christianity in

Christian-
ity pre-
served
because
divine.

these earlier centuries, Roman persecution could have done it. But instead of exterminating it, the fiercer the persecution the more rapidly spread the religion, and the deeper were struck its roots. Nor can this be explained as the natural result of persecution. Nothing less than a Presence within the religion, and a Wisdom and a Power presiding over and directing it in its course, can explain its final triumph. The same Divine Being who had put upon the Christian religion at its birth the stamp of its Divine origin, stamped it anew, by giving it its victory over all its foes, as a religion He had Himself given to men and would Himself protect.

CHAPTER III.

DIVINE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY AS SEEN IN THREE OF ITS INHERENT QUALITIES.

THESE qualities are, first, its power of self-recuperation; secondly, its impulse to self-development; thirdly, its capacity for self-expansion. These are the qualities not of an artificial scheme of religion, nor of a religion that the religious instincts of mankind are sufficient to account for, but of a living organism animated and directed by an indwelling and a self-conscious Intelligence. This organism is known in the Sacred Scriptures under the comprehensive titles of "kingdom of God," "the body of Christ" "an habitation of God through the Spirit," "the Church of the Living God." Its mode of manifesting itself is through a visible, tangible, active organization known as the Church. Of the inherent qualities of this organization under the title of the Church, we will notice the most comprehensive and important.

The Church
directed by
an indwell-
ing Intelli-
gence.

SECTION I. — ITS SELF-RECUPERATIVE POWER.

This is its power to recover itself from every disaster, whatever may have caused it, — a power Preserved in its perils. to recoup itself when betrayed and despoiled by alien alliances such as a union of Church and State, — or when decoyed into perils by false or by misguided friends. Examples of the exercise of this self-recuperative power in the progress of the Church along the centuries, have been indefinitely numerous and unmistakably clear. To enumerate them would be virtually to write the History of Christianity. Sometimes the perils into which the Church has been plunged have been such as apparently to threaten the continuance of Christianity as a vital power on the earth. Only specimens of these perils can here be enumerated.

I. At the beginning of the second century the Apostles were gone; there was no canon of Perils of the early days of the Church. their writings for the guidance of the churches they had planted; and there were no religious teachers or leaders competent to take up their work and to carry it forward. Heresies abounded. An overestimate of the merit of martyrdom begat in weak minds a fanatical and most dangerous craving to be martyrs. They purposely irritated the heathen that they might thereby insure their

own martyrdom. Christianity was in imminent peril. Its pure and gentle spirit was threatened with extinction by a rude and obtrusive fanaticism. The recuperative power of the indwelling and divinely given Spirit of the Church, the Holy Ghost, working in and through a select few, saved it.

2. The Church was again in extreme peril from the overwhelming influx of half-Christianized heathen under Constantine, the first of the Christian Emperors, near the beginning of the fourth century. The re-creative Spirit energized the hearts of the people, and in due time, at Nicæa, the Church at its first General Council, amid violent controversy, expressed itself in the formulation of the Nicene Creed.

Perils from
influx of
Christian-
ized
heathen.

3. Papal corruptions, that from the sixth century prevailed for nearly a thousand years, were as deadly a burden as the Church could bear and still survive. The revival of learning in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with a restoration of the ancient literatures of Greece and Rome to their long lost supremacy, brought with it also a revival of the old spirit of heathenism which these literatures embodied. The so-called Humanism of the new learning carried mildew and blight into the heart of the Papal Court, as well as into the hearts of not a few leaders of the Church else-

Papal cor-
ruptions.

where, outwardly threatening the very life of the Church itself. But the divinely re-creating Spirit was at work in His own quiet but effective ways through all the dreary centuries. Sometimes it was a pious monk who was moved to action and to utterance of his emotions in hymns that in various translations still linger in the hearts and on the lips of saintly souls. Sometimes it was a Thomas à Kempis who was inspired to write an "Imitation of Christ," over which worshipping souls still pore with godly enthusiasm. Again, it was some obscure scholar whose name has not survived, who was quickened into writing a condensed theology (*Theologie Deutsche, Theologia Pectoris*), so full of the very marrow of the Gospel as to fill with profoundest satisfaction the souls of the most eminent of Christian scholars. And still again it was the same retrieving Spirit that incited Tauler, and Wycliffe, and other reformers before the Reformation, to the utterance of burning words and the kindling of wide-spreading flames; and it was the same Spirit that finally gave to Christianity the victory over Papal and other corruptions.

4. Christianity has also, at different periods and in special localities, been affected disastrously by misuse of its doctrines. Some of its fundamental truths, severed from their relations to other and qualifying

Misuse of
doctrines.

truths, have at times been magnified to a degree that has transformed them into deadly errors. Two or three instances of this may here suffice. Thus, Divine Sovereignty has sometimes been so exalted as to make Christianity a system of fatalism, instead of a living interposition of God in behalf of man. Again, the position of man in the scheme of creation, and his natural capacity for attaining it, have been so set forth as virtually to make God to be no more than the equal of man in the moral and religious movements of the world. The rescuing Spirit has always in due time intervened. At one time Latitudinarianism in England was carried to the point of disparaging possible religious convictions as at least needless, if not mischievous. Religion almost lost its vital power. The renewing Spirit through the Wesleys and Whitefield brought back to it a new and vigorous life. In New England the Half-way Covenant came near bringing spiritual death to the churches. The same Spirit, through Jonathan Edwards, interposed to save them. In Germany Rationalism did its deadly work. The never-failing Spirit through Schleiermacher and his associates wrought effectively in repairing the ruins.

5. The Church has also often fallen into perils no less dangerous than those already mentioned, when it has persisted in usages, rites, Formalism formulas of doctrine, and modes of life and cant.

from which the spirit that gave them form and meaning has long since departed. Formalism and cant are among the deadliest foes of Christianity; and when the recuperating Spirit succeeds in breaking these up, and, to the great horror of formalists, in revolutionizing the whole existing type of religion, it never fails to bring to the Church new life and power.

And this recuperation of Christianity, these rescues of it from its perils, have not been due to any intelligible law of natural evolution, but in every case to a recurrence and re-recurrence, under guidance of its own ever renewing Spirit, to the personal Christ, and to the Holy Scriptures through which the mind and will of Christ are revealed, and the mind and will of the delinquent Church are enlightened and quickened.

And in every instance of recovery from temporary decline, it has been not a mere reinstatement of Christianity in its former condition that has been accomplished, but a movement to a higher position and an exhibition of ever increasing evidence that a Divine Wisdom and Power first gave it to mankind and still perpetuates it among men.

Recovery
and up-
ward move-
ment of the
Church.

SECTION II. — ITS POWER OF SELF-DEVELOPMENT.

A second inherent quality of Christianity is its ceaseless impulse to disclose progressively the fullness of its meaning, its spirit, its power, and its resources. It does this in three ways: first, by developing itself as a body of moral and religious ideas; secondly, by developing through progressive knowledge of its truths a constantly improving type of character in its adherents; thirdly, through progressive knowledge of its truths and continuous improvement in its type of character, it develops and organizes for itself an ever increasing variety of effective forces. Fullness of truth and perfection of character were at the outset clearly exhibited in the Person of Christ, and through the development of these conjointly and historically in the personalities of the living Church there have been called into being the ever multiplying forces of the Church. The ideas, the character, and the agencies were all necessarily in forms determined by the age in which they originated. They embodied meanings deeper and broader than by any possibility could then be understood. Only by a process of unfolding running through many centuries could these meanings be developed.

1. Development of Christian ideas. These as first given were definite and fixed, admitting of neither addition nor subtraction. But they were given in Oriental imagery and in metaphorical terms. To disentangle the meanings from this imagery, and to get them out of metaphor into literal statements, have required a succession of steps now easily traced in history along the Christian centuries.

Development of Christian ideas. *Idea of God.* *α.* Progressive understanding of the Christian idea of God. This idea, so slowly apprehended, was given by Christ, both in His own Person and in His words. It is complex, made up of various attributes. Of these attributes one or another at different periods has preponderated in the minds of men and distorted the whole conception. Thus at one time the Sovereignty of God has been so magnified that He has been made an arbitrary Despot, who was to be approached only remotely through symbolic services or through a series of intermediary agents. At another time justice has been made so to overtop every other attribute as to become the pivot on which the whole scheme of the universe has been conceived to turn. At another time every attribute has been submerged in benevolence. The action and reaction of these one-sided conceptions of Deity have led to a minute examination of the grounds of each, and

of the different points of view from which they were derived. Only by degrees, through comparison and combination, has there emerged what is now so generally known as the Christian idea of God, — that comprehensive idea of the Fatherhood of God in which the most opposite attributes are united and reconciled, and which includes the idea of the eternal filial relation of man.

b. Development of the Christian idea of man. No single text of the New Testament teaches it; only by critical analysis of a great variety of texts can it be definitely as-^{Idea of man.}certained. In one class of texts we have a picture of man as he was before he became conscious of his guilt; in another we have a view of him after knowing that he was a transgressor; in a third class we see him as he is when made a new creature in Christ. Christianity sets forth in these and other texts man's primal, essential relation of sonship; that sin is a progressive alienation from the Father; that it is destructive of that blessedness which should attend the normal relation of Divine Father and created child; and that this awful rupture of normal relations has its origin in man's perverted self-seeking. All the terms used for sin as an inward state contain this idea. In expounding Moses, Christ teaches that sin is in the desire, not in the overt act.

Christianity teaches that holiness, on the other hand, is an eternal beatific advance toward perfect union with the Father. It exemplifies a perfect manhood in the person and life of Jesus, and enjoins it in His command, "Be ye perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect." This ideal type of humanity is exhibited alone by Christianity. It is not found in the Old Testament, nor in any pre-Christian philosophy. The truths Christ taught are not the deductions of reason, but the flashings forth of His own Divine consciousness and His Divine knowledge of the souls of men; and there has been through the centuries a gradual unfolding of these truths to the Christian consciousness. They have revealed man to himself. Becoming thus self-evident and self-convincing, they appeal ever more and more to the consciences and hearts of men.

c. Progressive understanding of the redemptive work of Christ. Until the fifth century, the various aspects of man's nature and relations had not so engaged the attention of believers as to excite controversy. But from the time of Pelagius and Augustine, discussion never ceased; out of the contests have arisen the various theories of the atonement from Origen, through Anselm, Lombard, Grotius, and others, down to the present day. One theory has superseded another, and each new aspect of the truth has

Redemp-
tive work
of Christ.

added something to the apprehension of it. But while it is true that these successive theories have looked at the doctrine from a progressively wider angle of vision, yet it also remains true that the endeavor to set forth a complete *rationale* of the atonement has burdened Christianity with errors, which all through the centuries have obscured the faith, or offended the intelligence, or oppressed the hearts, of devout Christian believers. The New Testament simply sets forth the fact and the effects of the atonement. Our theories as to the Divine process, however useful, are necessarily only imperfect ways of explaining a Divine method which is above and beyond all human philosophy. The effects of Christ's atoning life and death, as set forth in the New Testament, are a present salvation from the supreme love of self, and hence from the love of sin, a practical belief in the Fatherhood of God and in the brotherhood of man, and a sure faith in the Holy Spirit at work in the hearts of men for their final redemption from sin.

The attempts to construct a rational theology on purely philosophical bases have always ended in contradiction and confusion, or in flat negations. Neither Christ nor His Apostles ever attempted to explain the inexplicable; and all subsequent efforts to do this have only more and more taught us the great truth, that, in the whole realm of ex-

Theology
not con-
structed on
purely phi-
losophical
bases.

istence, wherever the Divine and human touch, there must of necessity be mystery. The regenerating process on the human side is clear. Man, feeling himself debased, a slave to sin, finds that he cannot escape the thralldom; recognizing his helplessness, he casts himself on Jesus Christ and finds peace. This divine remedy, faith in a crucified Christ, was "to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness." But to the renewed man Christ has become "the power of God and the wisdom of God." He may not be able to explain how his redemption has been accomplished, but he cannot gainsay the fact. He is a new creature in Christ Jesus. By actual experience of regeneration, men know it to be an eternal truth of God. About the beginning of the eighteenth century, this experience, through a progressive recognition of the work of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of men, was formulated into the theological doctrine of Regeneration. Thus, with a clearer recognition of the limitations of the human understanding, and of the agency of the Holy Spirit, has there gradually emerged a profounder conception of the redemptive work of Christ.

2. Progressive improvement in the type of Christian character. The new kind of goodness which Christ in His own character exhibited, and which He in His teachings set forth, notwithstanding the many

Improve-
ment in
type of
character.

perversions and distortions which at times have deformed it, has been gradually penetrating the hearts and controlling the lives of men. Its progressive work through the centuries may be the more easily traced by noting some of the more striking forms which the Christian life has assumed. In the various orders of monasticism, in the different moral standards of the laity and the priesthood, in the laws and ranks of knight-hood, in the penances and purgations of the Roman Church, in the legalism of later Protestantism, in the puritanism of England and America, in the pietism of Germany, we see not only crudeness, extravagance, or one-sidedness, but also an earnest struggling for a higher type of Christian living; and in spite of perversions, exaggerations, and puerilities, we discover in the midst of rude or licentious civilizations an ever increasing desire for the ideal type of Christian character.

The existing type in the Church at large, notwithstanding its imperfections, plainly surpasses that of any previous age. It expresses more fully that which was the central principle and ruling motive in the character of Jesus. This improved type is illustrated in the change which has been wrought in all our social and civic institutions. Legislatures regarding the interests of laborers and children; the elevation of woman;

Existing
type of
character
in the
Church.

the abolition of slavery ; our courts of justice ; our penal regulations looking toward reform rather than vengeance ; — all these, and much else that might be mentioned, are only the exponents of the gradual elevation and purification by Christianity of individual character ; and along with the Hospitals, Orphan Asylums, Homes, and all the various appliances for helping the unfortunate, they are just so many signs of that Divine principle of love which is the constituent principle of all that is highest and best in Christian character.

3. Christianity has wonderfully developed its resources for aggressive work. This may be seen to-day in the organized forces at work in our own country and elsewhere. Sunday Schools, which developed in England out of the Ragged Schools, are the growth of the last hundred years ; only about thirty years ago they were introduced by a gentleman of Brooklyn into Germany, where they have continued to spread. The Brotherhood of St. Andrew, originating with a few young men in a church in Chicago, has enlisted thousands of eager men all over the country in Christian work ; the Society of Christian Endeavor, including both men and women, is bringing into activity a vast amount of otherwise unused power. "Revivalism," with its various methods, including that new form of it

Resources
for aggressive
work.

called "Missions" in the Episcopal Church, has brought truth home to a multitude of consciences. Missionary Agencies, Home and Foreign, are always multiplying their forces. The Young Men's Christian Association, with its numerous beneficent activities, is another mighty agency which Christianity is using for its progress in the world. The Salvation Army, that miracle of modern times, which has penetrated more deeply into the sin and wretchedness of cities, perhaps, than any other Christian agency, has met its reward in raising to spiritual life multitudes whom society had despaired of as beyond all possible moral resurrection. All these and many others, including that powerful agency, the Religious Press, have developed their strength for the same divine end, — to raise the fallen, to help the weak, to feed the hungry, to instruct the ignorant, and to preach the Good News to all who will hear. But it must not be forgotten that all this Christian work is individual work, — the product of the faith and zeal of men working individually, — and that the history of Christian organizations shows that they multiply and prove effective in exact proportion to the work of the Holy Spirit of God on the hearts of individual Christians.

SECTION III. — EXPANSIVENESS OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.

The difference between body and soul is universally recognized. The distinction between letter and spirit is not less real, though less commonly apprehended. The letter, like the body, is the outward form of an inner life which it attempts to declare, but cannot adequately represent. The letter is appreciable by the senses, the spirit only through the soul's experience. Christianity is known to us through both its letter and its spirit. The former in its facts and statements is historically and unalterably fixed; the latter has always been, and still is, progressively experienced. Limited by the letter of its historic facts, no progress of the race can outstrip the expansiveness of its spirit. It keeps pace with, and appropriates to itself, and sanctifies to its own ends, the spirit of all truth, of all real beauty, and of all moral goodness. Thus the spirit of Christianity is in harmony, —

1. With the spirit of Science and Philosophy. Science and philosophy are two distinct methods of human inquiry, each possessing its own distinctive spirit, and with that spirit imbuing its votaries. Thus the spirit of science is a self-sacrificing search for the demonstrably real. Its most dis-

Spirit and
letter of
Christian-
ity.

Spirit in
harmony
with the
spirit of
Science and
Philosophy.

tinguishing characteristic is intellectual honesty. Philosophy is equally honest and earnest in its endeavors to bring the real and the true into direct relation with human life. There may be both scientists and philosophers who are not true to the spirit of their callings. Prepossessions, pride of intellect, and self-conceit may mislead them. But with the genuine spirit of science and philosophy Christianity is always in accord,—has always found them, and, it is safe to say, always will find them, among her most serviceable handmaids. The absolutely real and true, whether of science or philosophy, can never be otherwise than absolutely harmonious with religion.

2. With the spirit of Civilization. Civilization, necessarily, has its outward and visible forms of law, government, social regulations, conventionalities, and civilities; but the spirit of civilization can be known and appreciated by those only who have lived in its atmosphere. Its outward forms are necessary to control and subdue, and imbue humanity with the spirit of it; but its spirit is subtle and refining, and has its seat in the soul of man; and it is capable of almost unlimited advance from its elementary stages. The farther it advances, the more readily does the spirit of Christianity assimilate it. Only under a Christianized civilization can Christianity achieve its best results for man.

*In harmony
with the
spirit of
civiliza-
tion.*

3. With the spirit of Beauty, — Beauty in nature and in art. Nature in her phases and in her productions appeals to something in man which we call his sense of beauty. The sense becomes acute and refining in proportion to the degree of one's æsthetic culture. Imitation of beauty in nature has given us the fine arts; in its metaphorical sense, it is applied to intellectual products (Shelley's Hymn to Intellectual Beauty) and to moral character (beauty of holiness). The spirit of beauty in all its forms may attain to an extreme degree of dignity, delicacy, and refinement; and the spirit of Christianity, which sympathizes with it at every stage, surpasses it in giving the finishing charm to its highest productions, which it then appropriates as means of moral and spiritual culture.

4. With the spirit of Worship in all its forms. The spirit of Christianity is expansive enough to be at home in, and to exert its power on, every form of ritual, from the most elaborate, imposing, and gorgeous, down to the tamest, baldest, and most barren. One worshipper may be just as devout and spiritual-minded in the use of the former, as another in the use of the latter.

5. With a true Catholicity. It is expansive enough to admit of sincere and hearty fellowship with all disciples of Christ, however narrow-minded may be the sects into

which they are divided, and however rigid and sharply drawn may be their lines of separation.

A religion expansive enough in its spirit to advance and harmonize with the spirit of science, philosophy, civilization, and art, to maintain a vigorous life under any ritual and no ritual, and to override in its fellowship all the hedges and barriers of the narrowest sectarianism, gives good evidence of having originated with the Father of the spirits of all flesh, and of being a religion which will eventually command the allegiance of the world.

CHAPTER IV.

DIVINE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY, AS SEEN
IN THE COMPLETENESS OF ITS SYSTEM
OF MORAL AND RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES.

1. THE moral and religious are but two sides of one body of truth. That the two sides may be separately considered, and yet neither one of them wholly separated from the other, is fully comprehensible. Science may show that the principles of morality are grounded in natural laws, or are constitutive of personal being, and do not have their origin in the Sovereign arbitrary will of God; and psychology may show the principles of religion to be in absolute accord with every law and principle of the human soul. But the utmost that either science or philosophy can do is to confirm, each in its own way, what Christian revelation has taught; they cannot improve upon its teaching.

2. After the most exhaustive analysis and the most exact synthesis of the moral and religious principles of the New Testament, these are found to be so correlated and coordinated one to another as to constitute an harmonious and unified whole.

Moral and
religious
principles
harmonious.

The ablest and acutest intellects have thus far failed to point out disharmony or defect.

3. The religious principles of the New Testament have furnished the materials for the profoundest and most complete Philosophy of Religion yet constructed, and no philosophy of religion has yet been thought out which in the slightest degree invalidates New Testament teachings, or has furnished a system that can be properly called more rational. Natural science may not know how, with its physical tests, to admit the facts of the incarnation, the Trinity, the atonement, and the resurrection; but a profound philosophy of religion finds them to be indispensable factors.

Philosophy
of Religion
found in
New Testa-
ment.

4. It is not to be forgotten that a philosophy of religion was something of which the writers of the New Testament were entirely innocent. They had no such philosophy of their own, and they never dreamed of any such that might be deduced from their writings in after generations. They wrote either as historians or as dogmatic teachers, but each according to his own divine enlightenment. There is no evidence whatever that they wrote either with an individual or with a concerted purpose to develop any kind of philosophy or system. Yet unwittingly they laid down essential principles. God guided

But not
known to
its writers.

them, and "they builded better than they knew."

5. Neither is it to be forgotten that there existed no *a priori* system of doctrines, either in the minds of the public or of individuals, which the New Testament was written to illustrate. Such a system is discernible in the New Testament, and can be constructed out of its writings, but only after a minute and critical study of these as a whole; just as the science of Geology, for example, can be constructed only after a minute and careful study of all the facts of nature gathered from the earth's surface or extracted from its crust; or a science of Sociology can be constructed only after a careful collection, critical analysis, and classification of all the facts of human society.

Complete
harmony
of their
thoughts,
though
working
independ-
ently.

6. That nine men so different in intellectual endowments and acquirements and in natural temperament as were the writers of the New Testament, working each on his own independent line of thought and action, should have so entirely accorded in all their moral and religious conceptions as to furnish a completely harmonious system of theological and ethical thought, can be rationally accounted for only on the theory that they were all Divinely guided, and that they have left us the records of a religion which originated in the omniscient mind of God.

CHAPTER V.

DIVINE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY PROVED BY ITS FITNESS TO BECOME THE ONE UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

CHRISTIANITY bears the unmistakable marks of the climate, of the age, and of the people where it originated. Its records are full of Oriental imagery and of Oriental hyperbole. It none the less shows its fitness to be universal.

1. A religion which is to be universal must be one whose doctrinal principles (*principia*) cannot be undermined or overthrown by knowledge derived from any other source. The Sciences and Philosophies have not only not invalidated any of the truths of Christianity, but have served to confirm them.

A religion to be universal must be confirmed by all other truth.

2. A universal religion must be able to vindicate its conceptions of the natures of both God and man at the bar of human reason. Reason was given to men to be used, and Christianity has stood the test. Christian conceptions of God and man, as found in the New Testament, not only now command the assent of reason, but are used to furnish the

Must have true ideas of God and man.

basis of theories which are proposed as substitutes for Biblical Christianity.

3. A universal religion must not only set up a perfect standard of character for man's attainment, but it must meet the needs of man, his fears, his weaknesses, his wants. It has furnished the one in the Person and commands of its Divine Author, and the other by its precious promises and offers of Divine help.

4. A religion for the whole human race must, in all its processes, whether in raising men to its standard or in its cultus, accord strictly with the known laws of mental action, i. e. with the demonstrably clear requirements of psychology. The Christian religion pre-eminently among all religions does this, though originating among a people little given to a study of their mental processes. This agreement of Christianity with the laws of psychology is becoming increasingly clear.

5. A universal religion must, in its whole spirit, requirements, and methods, be capable of keeping pace with the progress of the race, and, instead of being outgrown, must ever lead as guide and patron of all good learning and art, and as an inspirer to all pure and noble living. In these respects, among all nations Christianity leads the van.

6. A universal religion must be able to make itself a home in all climates, in all stages of barbarism or civilization, and under all forms of government. Christianity has abundantly proved its power of adaptation to all these conditions, never failing to elevate and refine, working always from within outward, from its own centre towards the betterment of its environment and the overcoming of adverse forces.

Adaptable
to all cir-
cumstances
and cli-
mates.

CHAPTER VI.

INADEQUACY OF THE VISIBLE MEANS OF
CHRISTIANITY TO THE PRODUCTION OF
ITS ENDS.

SO far as we know, God never accomplishes His ends by fiat, but always through the use of means or second causes. The means employed in planting Christianity were various and manifold. While they were specially fitted to the ends to be accomplished, they were in and by themselves wholly inadequate to the results produced.

1. The Miracles of Jesus were specially well fitted to convince the world of His Divine commission. They appealed immediately to the senses, and so commanded attention. They were wrought independently of all known law, and were clearly not the result of human might or skill. They thus compelled faith in their Author as One exercising Divine power, and in the truth of His teachings. To the same end the apostles received from Him "authority," along with their commission, to work miracles. Prophecy was equally well suited to its own ends.

2. The truths of Christianity, both ethical and religious, pertaining both to God and man, were exactly suited to the work of influen-
Truths.
 cing to an acceptance of Christianity.

All truth, simply as truth, is fitted to persuade to the end contemplated by it. As real existences, men instinctively accept the real and reject the unreal or false. Christianity as a revelation of the real is pre-eminently fitted to persuade men.

3. Man has many instinctive fears and yearnings. Christianity abounds in considerations and promises suited to allay the one
Promises.
 and to satisfy the other. Its promises are accompanied with positive assurances of ability to fulfil.

4. The demonstrable certainty of immortality given by the resurrection of Jesus, coupled with the assurance of final awards as results
Immor-
tality.
 of the earthly life, have secured to Christianity the most effective power yet possessed by any religion known among men for determining to righteousness of life.

5. Christianity, honestly accepted and complied with, produces results individual and social which command the approval of
Results in
present life.
 all impartial and reasonable minds. Its enlightening, regulating, and humane influences on society are fitted to extend it to all the nations of the earth.

A religion so richly qualified to meet all the

requirements necessary to the accomplishment of its end ought not, one would think, to meet with long delay in winning to its service the whole human race. But the miracles, the truths and the promises of Christianity, its assurance of a future life, and its provisions for a happy life in the present, have all proved inadequate means for the conversion of the world to righteousness. They have succeeded so far only as they have been accompanied and made effectual by some energizing spiritual power. They have won, and still win, the assent of the understanding, but another Power has always been requisite to secure the consent of the heart. To gain that consent has ever been and still is the prerogative of the renewing Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit works on men individually. Before society can feel the renovating influences of Christianity, men, one by one, must have felt the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. And the quickening Spirit alone can give vitalizing effect to the means Christianity uses. Through all time, in the first century as well as in this nineteenth century, this work of the Spirit is a seal on the soul of the believer and a sign to the eyes of the world, attesting Christianity to be a religion of Divine planting and of Divine perpetuation.

CHAPTER VII.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE METHOD OF PRODUCING THE CHRISTIAN TYPE OF CHARACTER.

WHAT the Christian type of character is, we have already seen. The Ideal of it was derived from the Real in the Person of Jesus. In Him centred every virtue, and each virtue in Him harmonized with every other. The Christian type of character is a Christ-like character, consisting not of mere outward and negative, but of inward and positive virtues, — of inward purity or holiness, and of its outward realization or personal righteousness. The Christian type also includes alike the gentler virtues of patience and forbearance, and the hardier and sterner virtues of courage, and of whatever enters into true heroism. It is the high aim of Christianity to bring the human race into an approximation, as close as possible for finite and erring mortals, to the ideal perfection reached in the person of Jesus. It aims to make of each individual, and thus of the race, the utmost possible morally, socially, and intellectually.

The Ideal
of Christian
character
found in
Christ.

Now it is its production of character for both

the individual and the race, which constitutes the crowning test of its worth, and thus of its relative value and authority among the religions of the world. In the final and rapidly approaching conflict of Christianity with the old religions of the world, the issue of the struggle will turn, not on its doctrines, but on the question, Is it fitted to do, and is it actually doing, the highest and best for man,—among all the religions, is Christianity best adapted to purify, elevate, and sanctify human character?

The principles which philosophy discerns as working co-operatively and co-ordinately in the production of facts, are said to be philosophical in their operation. There is thus seen to be a profound philosophy in the Divine method of producing Christian character.

1. Christianity is profoundly and soundly philosophical in its initial steps in the production of Christian character. It begins by reconstructing the substructures of character in the human heart. It does this by supplanting selfishness, the root of all evil, and implanting love of God and man. It imparts this love through conviction of personal guilt and a consciousness of the removal of this guilt by and through faith in the all-loving and self-sacrificing Christ. This was a philosophy too profound for the philo-

Aim of
Christian-
ity to pro-
duce in the
race that
perfect
character.

Philosophi-
cal in its
first steps
in the pro-
duction of
Christian
character.

sophic Greeks to understand, but is too sound, too hygienic in its results on character, for any honest and intelligent psychologist to misunderstand.

2. Christianity is profoundly philosophical in its method of upbuilding character on the foundation which it lays in the heart of man. It utilizes the most effective of all the constructive principles which disclose themselves in the human soul, — the principle of faith. Every man becomes like the being or object he most thoroughly believes in and loves. Faith and love always co-exist, and conjointly reproduce in the believer the character of the one he most loves and believes in.

Philosophical in its method of upbuilding character.

3. Profound philosophy is also seen in the moulding and uplifting influence of sympathy, communion, or fellowship, to which the Christian is introduced by believing in Christ, — communion with God, with Christ the Saviour, Master, Example, and communion with all saints now living on earth or in heaven. The influence of this fellowship on character is distinctively Christian, and bears the stamp of a Divine Wisdom or Philosophy.

Through sympathy and communion.

4. The moulding influence of earthly discipline under the omniscient eye and guiding hand of God shows a more than human wisdom. Christianity alone taught that

By earthly discipline.

whom the Lord loves He chastens. Even Christ is said to have been made perfect through suffering. The whole history of the Church is a history of discipline. The pride and folly of men within it have brought chastisement, repentance, reform, and a higher life; and the persecutions of the world outside have given to it increased humility, devotion, and strength. The life of every individual man is a life of discipline; he makes plans, and God overturns them; he stretches his hopes toward a larger future, and God's restraining hand is laid on him; he looks forward to long and active usefulness, and health departs. Christianity alone teaches him that this severe discipline is from the hand of a loving, watchful Father; that it comes by the wise and tender mercy of God, educating him to be, like his Divine Master, humble in spirit, devoted to the work given him to do, and above all faithful in heart, — faithful even unto death. This is the Divine Philosophy of Christianity.

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